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THE VICTORY OF FAITH,

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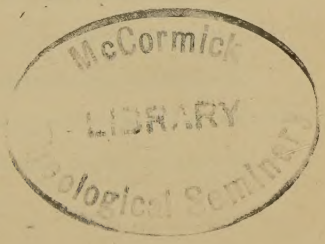
THE VICTORY OF FAITH,

AND OTHER SERMONS.

BY JULIUS CHARLES HARE, M.A.

RECTOR OF HERSTMONCEUX,

AND LATE FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE.



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TO

THE MASTER AND OTHER MEMBERS

OF TRINITY COLLEGE

THESE SERMONS ARE DEDICATED

BY ONE WHO OWES THE BUILDING UP OF HIS MIND,

AND MUCH HAPPINESS FOR MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS,

TO THE FRIENDS HE HAS FOUND AMONGST THEM,

AND WHO PRAYS THAT THEY AND THEIR SUCCESSORS,

AS LONG AS ENGLAND ENDURES,

MAY STILL EVER BE IN THE FOREMOST RANK

AMONG THE DISPENSERS OF KNOWLEDGE,

BOTH OF THAT KNOWLEDGE WHICH TREATS OF THIS WORLD,

AND OF THAT WHICH GUIDES TO HEAVEN.

11671

PREFACE.

THE Sermons on Faith, with which this Volume opens, are an expansion of a Course preacht before the University of Cambridge in the month of February last. Being called upon to publish them, I deemed it my duty to develope the argument somewhat more fully than my limits had allowed me to do in the pulpit. When I chose the subject, my wish was to shew that the office assigned to Faith in the Christian scheme is not at variance, but in harmony with the rest of man's nature, by tracing the influence of Faith, as exemplified in the relations of our natural life, as well as in the religion of the heathens, and of the Jews. I was desirous of assisting my youthful hearers in extricating themselves from a difficulty often felt by those who begin to reflect about religion, — namely, how Faith, of which they hear so little in the affairs and duties of ordinary life, should in religion be all in all. According to my original plan, the subjects treated in the last three sermons of the present series were to be preceded by an introductory one, speaking generally of Faith in its relation to the other parts of our being. But being led to look into Mr

commentary is no longer needed: for several of the most distinguisht members of our College have since pronounced a like sentence of condemnation against the Utilitarian Ethics. Mr Evans has done so in his *Church of God;* Professor Sedgwick in his *Discourse on the Studies of the University;* and Professor Whewell in his *Sermons on the Foundations of Morals.* One of the highest honours I have ever received was the Dedication of those Sermons, where my admirable friend calls me his forerunner, referring to this Sermon on Selfsacrifice. This has determined me to publish it; and greatly should I rejoice, if it might afford him the slightest help in the grand work he has undertaken. It is a hearty satisfaction to think that, after a sleep of half a century, into which the study of Moral Philosophy fell at Cambridge, from the deadening influence of the authorized system, it is now reviving under his auspices. May the mind, which has compast the whole circle of physical science, find a lasting home, and erect a still nobler edifice, in this higher region! May he be enabled so to let his light shine before the students of our University, that they shall see the truth he utters, and learn to glorify our heavenly Father, who has written His laws on their hearts!

In the tenth Sermon, which was preacht at a Visitation at Hastings, it may be thought that I have dwelt too exclusively on the errours and faults of our Church, and have said too little about the errours and faults of the

Dissenters. Had I been preaching to a body of Dissenters, I should have done the reverse. But I could never perceive that there was any profit in telling people of what is wrong in their neighbours. St Paul does not write to the Corinthians about the errours of the Galatians, nor to the Galatians about the sins of the Corinthians. Hence it has surprised me to find preachers on such occasions labouring to convince their congregation of the spotless excellence of our Church, and of the heinous errours of all who differ from us; both which points the chief part of the congregation are only too ready to allow. Many reasons indeed will withhold a minister, who has a due sense of his own frailties and infirmities, from setting himself up as a reprover of his brethren: nor did I presume to do so. I spoke of evils which are matters of history, of evils by which our Church has suffered and is suffering grievous injury, of evils to which, seeing that they have prevailed so long and widely, we must still be liable and prone. Let us glory in our Church. So far as she is Christ's Body, so far as she is Christ's Spouse, we cannot glory in her too highly, or love her too fervently, or devote ourselves to her too entirely. But even the Church in her earthly form still needs the righteousness of her Lord, and the purification of His Spirit: and greatly does it concern us to know and feel that the chief causes of our weakness lie in ourselves, in the carnal nature which still overlays and clogs the spiritual. While we glory in our Church, let us

confess the sins of her ministers and other members: so may we be led to repent of them more earnestly, and to strive more earnestly against them, and to watch more earnestly against every temptation that would beguile us into them, and to pray more earnestly for the help of the Spirit to purge and preserve us from them.

As the Universities are the great sources from which the Ministry of our Church is supplied, it seemed to me that a Sermon addrest more especially to the Ministry might not be out of place in a collection designed for the students at the University. And so many of them in these days visit Italy, that I have closed the volume with a Sermon preacht at Rome, treating of some of the feelings with which a traveler ought to be animated. From its subject, it came home to the hearts of a part of the congregation; and in compliance with their wishes I endeavoured to obtain the consent of the papal censor to its publication at Rome, having received a hint that such consent would not be withheld. For I had been misunderstood, as was natural enough, in the passage where I termed Rome "this *fateful* city," and had been supposed to have called it "this *faithful* city;" whereupon, while some of my Protestant hearers were offended by the expression, rumour was busy in reporting that a sermon had been preacht at the English Chapel speaking very favorably of Romanism. It will be seen that there was not a word to that effect; although I could not refrain from warning my hearers

against the indecency with which the English often behave in churches abroad, even while divine service is going on. Nor was there a word against Romanism: for it does not appear to me seemly or honorable for a person preaching at Rome by permission and under the protection of the Government, to invey openly against the errours of the Church of Rome. His task is indeed one of extreme delicacy and difficulty: for he has to watch over his own congregation, that he may preserve them in the truth. But this will always be done most effectually by preaching the truth positively, by urging the great Protestant doctrines instantly and constantly: in such a situation more especially is this the course which every right feeling imperatively enjoins. The imprimatur which I applied for, was not refused: but proceedings at Rome are so dilatory, that months past by, and I came away before it was obtained. Perhaps the delay was a civil substitute for a refusal.

I had meant to subjoin a few notes to these Sermons, in support or illustration of some of the arguments and statements. But as my absence from home, and want of books to refer to, with other occupations, would prevent my getting these notes through the press for some months, I have thought it best to reserve them for an appendix, and no longer to defer a publication which has already been too long delayed.

On this day I cannot forget, that on this day he, whom

God sent to deliver His Church from the thick darkness spread over it, and to reproclaim the great truth, that man is justified by Faith without the works of the Law, — I cannot forget that on this day that true and valiant man of God, the holy Martin Luther, entered into immortality. It is a day which to me also personally has been hallowed by the deepest grief and the most blessed assurance: for on this day he who had been the light of my life gave up his soul to his Saviour. O that a blessing might rest on these Sermons, so that they might help some in embracing the truth which Luther taught! O that they might strengthen their author to walk in the path in which his brother shewed him the way!

Herstmonceux,
February 18th, 1840.

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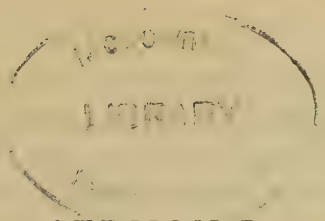

SERMON I.

FAITH, THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD.

1 John v. 4.

This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

One of the first things which must needs strike every reader of the New Testament, even the most thoughtless and careless, is the perpetual mention that is made of Faith, the great and paramount importance attacht to Faith. Faith is there spoken of as the foundation, the source, and the principle of everything that can be excellent and praiseworthy in man,—as the power by which all manner of signs and wonders are to be wrought,—as the golden key by which alone the treasures of heaven are to be unlockt,—as the unshakable indestructible rock on which the Christian Church is to be built. When our Lord came down from the mount, where the glory of the godhead shone through its earthly tabernacle during the fervour of his prayer, and where his spirit was refresht by talking with Moses and Elias on the great work he was about to accomplish,—when, after this brief interval of heavenly communion, he returned to the earth, and was met by that woful spectacle of its misery and helplessness, physical and moral, the child who was sore vext by the evil spirit, and whom his disciples could not heal,—and when, the cure having been wrought instantaneously by his

omnipotent word, he was askt by his disciples why they had been unable to effect it,—he replied, *Because of your unbelief.* And then, having thus taught them what was the cause of their weakness, he tried to revive and renew their hearts by telling them how they might gain strength, and how great strength they might gain: *Verily I say to you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustardseed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you:* thus encouraging them by declaring the infinite power that lies in the very least Faith, if it be but genuine and living. In like manner, when the wonder of the disciples is excited by the withering of the fig-tree, he calls away their thoughts from the particular outward effect, to the principle by which such effects, and far greater, may be produced: *Verily I say to you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done.* When we pass on from the Gospels to the Epistles, we find the power and workings of Faith still more frequently urged, and still more emphatically dwelt on. The most inattentive reader can hardly fail to observe, how the justifying character of Faith, in its absolute exclusive primacy, forms the central point of St Paul's preaching. And in the text we hear the Apostle of Love, joining his voice with that of him who is more especially the Apostle of Faith, and proclaiming that *this*, and this alone, *is the victory which overcometh the world, even our Faith.*

In the Old Testament, it is true, this great evangelical doctrine of the power of Faith is not often stated in the

same broad, naked, abstract manner. Even there however we read the declaration of the prophet Habakkuk, to which St Paul refers more than once, that *the just shall live by faith:* words which have often upheld the soul of the believer, when it might otherwise have failed and sunk under the crushing weight of the world. And if we look beyond the letter, and search into the principles which pervade and animate the Old Testament, it becomes plain that they are the very same, which are merely brought forward more definitely and explicitly in the New; and that the whole history, as is set forth in that great chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is a record of the warfare waged by Faith, of its victories, its triumphs, and its conquests. Indeed this accords with the main character of the Old Testament; where we see those very truths exhibited visibly and livingly, in type and symbol, in action and endurance, which were afterward to be proclaimed under the New Covenant in their eternal aboriginal universality. Nor is this process different from that which has prevailed in the other provinces of human thought. Everywhere the thing exists, and is taken up among the objects and elements of action, long before the thought comes forward into distinct consciousness. The sun did not lie slumbering beneath the horizon, until man had made out the laws which were to regulate his course. States had sprung up, and spread far and wide, and had grown into empires, and had armed themselves with power and with knowledge, before any one dreamt of speculating upon the principles of government and of social union. For it is only the word of God, giving utterance to the law, that precedes the work: and it is through the work that the knowledge of the law comes

to the mind of man, and by the work that it is awakened there. The word of God goes before; and no sooner has it issued from the Eternal Mind, than the work starts forth in the fulness of reality: the thought and word of man follow after, and are often centuries, or even millenaries behind.

Hence however the reader of the Old Testament, not having his attention so immediately drawn to the point, will not be so much startled and surprised, as a person reading the New Testament for the first time must needs be, by the great and wonderful things which are there predicated concerning Faith. And though much is also said concerning Love in the New Testament, and much concerning Obedience and Purity and Holiness, though great weight and moment are ascribed to them, and precious and glorious things are declared of them, yet all this does not seem so strange and perplexing, so utterly at variance with man's ordinary notions and opinions, as the sayings with regard to Faith. For although Christian Love and Christian Obedience and Purity are totally different, not merely in degree, but in principle, and therefore in kind, from anything that was ever known, or even imagined upon earth, before the wreck of fallen humanity was glorified by the taking up of the manhood into God, still there were already certain qualities which bore the same name in the vocabulary of the natural man; and these were prized among the idols of his heart and mind, as the guardian deities of his domestic and civic life. From the very condition and constitution of mankind, Love and Obedience were necessarily in some measure consecrated, by being embodied in outward institutions of the deepest interest and widest power, by being at once the foundation and the

cementing principles of family and of national existence. Love is so inseparably mixt up with the primary instincts and necessities of our nature, that, had it wholly past away, mankind would have sunk into a putrid mass of worse than brutish licentiousness, which in the course of a generation must have crumbled to atoms under the joint action of those two natural and indissoluble allies, Lust and Hatred. Obedience was establisht in families by the indefeasible authority of strength over weakness, of protection over helplessness, of kindness over affection: while in every social union the first principle must needs be the subordination and conformity of each particular will to the will of the whole body, so far at least as is deemed requisite for the preservation and support of that body. Thus, wherever men coalesced into communities, it became apparent that such communities could not be held together, except by some common bond of order, by rights, by duties, and by obedience. Nor was man without monitors, to remind him that he should endeavour to purify his life, from the worst at least of the pollutions that beset it. His very pride called up the thought of his superiority to all the creatures, whether animate or inanimate, that he saw around him, and warned him that he ought to have nobler purposes and higher aims than any sensual or worldly gratification can yield. Conscience sounded through the wreck of his soul, like the wind whistling through the ruins of a city that once bore the sceptre of empire, Babylon, or Palmyra, or Egyptian Thebes, admonishing him that the edifices, of which he saw the fragments, had been built and held together by Law, and that the decay of Law had been their destruction. Different too as these dim and shadowy notions were from the heavenly realities which Christ has

set up in their stead, there was still a resemblance in them, betokening a certain cognateness. The sons of God had indeed entered into a lawless union with the daughters of men; and their progeny for generation after generation had wedded themselves more and more closely to the earth, and had degenerated more and more from their heavenly stock. Yet still some traces of their higher parentage might be discerned in their features; and from these the moral sentiments and the affections derived that power and sanctity, which they still retained: so that, when the Gospel proclaimed its holier Morality and its godlier Love, its voice did not pass altogether unechoed over the earth, as it did when it declared the soul-hallowing, world-conquering might of Faith.

Moreover, since the Gospel has been set up on high over the heads of the nations, and has been acknowledged, outwardly at least, to be the one great and only pure source of wisdom and truth, the very language of men, and all the manifold currents of thought and opinion, have been so shaped and modified by it, — so much reflected light has been shed abroad by it, even upon those who have not been dwelling immediately under its rays, — so much has been effected by its holy precepts toward correcting and ennobling the notions and views, so much by its sacramental influences in the way of purifying and elevating the feelings and affections of mankind, — that whoever sits down nowadays in a Christian country to read the Bible, comes to it with a mind prepared to receive and assent to a number of its truths, as matters of unquestioned certainty and general notoriety, without being aware that they too are a portion of the boundless riches which Christ has poured out over the earth. Thus it comes to pass, that

even those who turn away in selfcomplacent blindness from the more peculiar and essential doctrines of the Gospel, are still mostly ready to admit the excellence of its Morality, and the beauty of its Charity: and they are willing to receive these into their own code of life; though not till they have enfeebled and deadened them both, by cutting them off from that living root of Faith, out of which alone can they grow in perennial vigour and bloom. Indeed, when a person is very forward in extolling either the Morality or the Charity of the Gospel, — when he is apt to single out the parable of the good Samaritan, and such texts as express the duty so beautifully enforced by it, or such as *God is Love*, for the main and only prominent objects of his admiration, — it will often be found, if we are led to look closely into his opinions, that his Christianity, — supposing him to make profession of it, — has been stunted and enervated, as it has been so generally in the last hundred years, into a sort of sentimental theophilanthropy. For although the Christian will continually bless God, from the inmost depths of his heart and soul, for that gracious revelation of himself, yet the thought of the manner in which that revelation was made, of Him from whose cross it was manifested to the world, — and the thought of his own unworthiness, and of the miserable return he has made for it, — will strike him with awe, will make him shrink from taking those sacred words in vain, from uttering them with unhallowed lips. If the angels themselves veil their eyes in the presence of God, how must he cast down his at the thought of the ineffable glory of the Mercy and Grace, the Holiness and Righteousness, through which they must pass, before they can behold the central throne of Love; and which are themselves only particular

manifestations of God's Love in his dealings with his creatures! Hence he will rather exclaim with the Psalmist (cxxx. 4), *For there is mercy with Thee; therefore shalt Thou be feared:* more especially so, on bethinking himself what deceitful notions men are sure to form of God's Love, when they measure it by their own deceitful standard, stripping it both of its Holiness and of its Justice, without which it could have no substantial reality, and degrading it into little better than infinite goodnature and imperturbable indifference, which they may insult and mock at as long as they please. They who look in the first instance at what they call God's Love, will take the second commandment without the first, which alone can sustain and give life to it: for God, they say, on his omnipotent throne cannot possibly need the love of his creatures; and they know not how it elevates and hallows the heart, to have a Being of infinite perfection to devote it to. They will take the Morality of the Gospel, without its Righteousness, and without the principle of that Righteousness; apart from which principle Morality can no more preserve an equable path, than a planet could revolve in its orbit without the centripetal attraction. For in nothing else is the wisdom of the Gospel, and its thorough knowledge of that which is in the heart of man, of his readiness to fall into every snare, and to be beguiled by every delusion, more apparent than in this, — that, in singling out the primary power through the exercise of which mankind were to become partakers of the glory ordained for them, it did not, like the Law, enjoin Holiness and Purity, or any moral observance, as the ground of justification: nor did it choose out Love as that ground; precious and inestimable as it declares Love to be, and exquisite as are the colours with

which it portrays Love's surpassing excellence and beauty. The Gospel did not make Holiness the ground of justification: it did not make Love the ground of justification: but it shewed its wisdom, and its knowledge of man's weakness and of his wants, in this more especially, that it made Faith the ground of justification.

Hereby alone was it possible to ensure the building up of the Christian life to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. It is only when that life is firmly rooted and grounded in Faith (A), that the straight stem of Righteousness will rise up, and branch out into the manifold ramifications of Duty, and that it will be crowned with the brightness and the sweetness of the amaranthine blossoms of Love. When moral rectitude is disjoined from Faith, there is no trust in it. It may stiffen into pharisaical formality, or ossify into stoical severity; or it may be withered by the blight and cankerworm of expediency; or it may tumble into the stye of Epicureanism, and rot there. When Love is disjoined from Faith, there is no trust in it. Caprice may throw it to the winds; chance may nip it in the bud; pride may blast it; vanity may eat away its core; prosperity may parch it; distress may freeze it; lust may taint and poison it: the slights and neglect, which it must needs experience at times in a world of frailty and mutability, will assuredly sour and embitter it. Indeed according to the true Christian idea of Love and of Righteousness, neither the one nor the other can exist at all, except as springing out of Faith. Whereas, when Faith is genuine and strong, in proportion to its genuineness and strength will it infallibly produce both Righteousness and Love; a Righteousness and Love, which, having a living seed within them, will be abiding. Hence, as it was reserved

for the Apostle of Faith to set forth for all ages that glorious picture of Love, which he himself so nobly realized in his life, on the other hand the Apostle of Love, after inculcating the duties of Obedience and Love through the main part of his Epistle, and shewing how they mutually support and twine round one another, proceeds, in the passage which I have chosen for my text, to declare what alone will enable them to stand, what alone will enable them to withstand and overcome the multitudinous temptations and harassing opposition which they must needs have to encounter in this world, even our Faith.

Such being the importance of Faith, it becomes a question of momentous interest, What is this Faith, of which such wonderful things are declared in the Holy Scriptures? What is it as a principle or power in human nature? and what relation does it bear to man's other gifts and faculties? With regard to those two great concentric spheres of human nature, the sphere of our affections, and that of our duties, or practical life, we have seen that, excellent and pure and heavenly as are the principles of the new life brought down by Christ, there was something answering and to a certain degree analogous to them already existing among mankind, in those fragmentary relics of the divine image, which had not been utterly effaced; somewhat in the same manner as in every flower, when it opens its petals, there is a likeness, lying partly in its shape, partly in the brightness of its colouring, which bespeaks its affinity to the sun, as well as its need of the sun to enliven and enlighten it. When the Law summed itself up in the twofold commandment of Love, and when the Gospel uttered its new commandment of a still diviner Love, of a Love after the pattern of that Saviour, who came down from his throne of

glory, and gave himself up to the weaknesses and infirmities of humanity, to a life of suffering and a death of shame, for the sake of mankind,—although it had never entered into the heart of man to conceive a Love like this,—yet men had a certain notion what was meant by Love. There was a feeling in their hearts, which, though its wings had been miserably clipt by selfishness, and though its life-blood had been poisoned by sensuality, was known to be of wondrous power, and to be the chief bestower of such happiness as man is capable of. Indeed under the form of Friendship, under which it is free from the taint of sensuality, it attained to such highths of heroic selfdevotion as have hardly been surpast: and the pictures of filial and fraternal Love, which the poets of old portrayed, still stand among the most beautiful of the exemplars that the Imagination has set up in its gallery of glorified humanity. So again the idea of Law had risen long before above the intellectual horizon. It had been impersonated in sage legislators: it had been embodied in wise and lasting and time-hallowed institutions: it had been declared to have a royal and heavenly nature, not springing from the perishable breath of man, not liable to decay or oblivion. Many of the moral virtues had been openly recognized as the noblest and most ennobling aims of human endeavour: Justice, Temperance, Fortitude were objects of admiration, almost of worship: and they had been realized in men whose names are still proverbial, and who gave proof that the being, made a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and worship, was still capable, even in his self-incurred degradation, of displaying features betokening his high original, and of shewing that he was designed to be the first and goodliest among the works of the Creator. A

certain dim idea of Duty the ancients had; though neither its grounds, nor its object were distinctly perceived. Even the idea of Sanctity had gleamed upon them, as of a thing admirable and desirable. The main deficiency of their ethics was, that they wanted the idea of Sin, the consciousness of their own inherent sinfulness and infirmity. Hence the moral virtues were regarded by them as so many gems in the crown of human nature, as the constituents of its dignity and majesty, to be wrested from the world by fighting against it; instead of being sought humbly by prayer as graces and gifts from above, to be nurtured in the solitude of our hearts, and guarded with unceasing watchfulness against the enemy within. They wanted the idea of Humility: they wanted the idea of Godliness: or at least they had debased it to bodily and intellectual, instead of moral and spiritual excellence. Thus their Love was imperfect, because it wanted the Love of God: their moral speculations were imperfect, because they wanted the notion of their duty to God, and of their relations to him. In a word, each wanted the groundwork and the consummating principle of Faith. In every part of the peopled earth, some sort of aspirations rose from the heart of humanity heavenward. In one country they might be rude and rugged and insulated, starting up from the midst of a dreary waste, like the pillars of Stonehenge. In another country they might be carved and polisht, and connected by figured friezes, and ranged in beautiful symmetry, and surrounded by a luxuriant cultivation, like the temples of the Greeks. But everywhere they were empty and roofless: no covering from on high had descended upon them: no headstone had placed itself at top of them, to turn them into a church.

Now, according to the analogy of these examples, we might naturally be led to infer that, as our Lord, when he came to set up the law of Love and the law of Holiness among mankind, did not come to destroy man's nature, but rather to fulfill it (B),—to fulfill its deepest cravings, its inmost unconscious yearnings, yearnings of which it only became conscious when it felt his fulness within them,—yea, to fill it, as the light fills the hollow chasms and yawning abysses of darkness, — we might infer that, as in both these cases he came to strengthen and purify and hallow what, however frail and feeble and imperfect, were already the best things to be found among mankind, and almost the only things that preserved them from being trampled to the ground and crusht by the iron hoof of sin,—we might infer that in like manner, when he chose Faith as the chief motive principle of the new life which he desired to awaken in man, he would in this case also take a principle which had already been stirring within him. We might infer that in this case also the new graft, however superior its fruitage might be, would still be congenial to the original stock. We might infer that the power which was to effect such wonders in the regenerate man, nay, which was to be the main instrument on man's part in the work of his regeneration, cannot possibly have been lying buried in total sleep till then, but must already have shewn forth some tokens of its greatness, even in the unregenerate heart. And yet Faith, as a principle of life and action, in any sense at all approaching to that which it bears in the New Testament, is scarcely heard of without the pale of Christianity. Even within that pale, if we listen to the language of men, when they are speaking of the springs and motives of their own conduct, or of that of others, or if we

look into the speculative treatises which profess to examine into those springs and motives, though we shall find many good qualities ascribed to man, and many evil qualities, it is a rare thing to meet with any mention of Faith, except in certain peculiar limited senses. Hence we might conclude, as mostly appears to be implied, that Faith, as a faculty of much consideration and power, is the peculiar organ of religion; and that it is in this sense alone, as standing in the sight of God, that man can be said to live by Faith. At the same time it must be borne in mind that, while Love and the various forms of Duty are continually propelling man to outward action, and manifesting themselves therein, whereby they force themselves into notice, the workings of Faith are mostly undergound: it is the root, as it is commonly called, of the Christian life: and when it shews itself forth, it is mostly combined with some other principle, which, bearing a closer relation to outward things, must needs be more prominent than that power whose peculiar province is the invisible. For thus much everybody knows about Faith, that its objects are not the objects of sight, but the things that are unseen. The point, as to which there is not the same agreement, is, How does it deal with its objects? in what relation does it stand to them? Or, to express the question which I have been led to select for our consideration in this course of sermons, more generally,—What is the Faith, to which such power is attributed in the New Testament? and is there anything at all analogous to it in the ways and workings of the natural man? What is the Faith which overcometh the world? and how, in what respects, by what means, is that great victory gained?

On these points the time now left me will only allow me

to say a few words: their fuller discussion must be reserved under God's grace for another occasion. For the present it must suffice to remark, that Faith is very often defined in some such manner as follows,—namely, as being an operation of the intellect, an intellectual assent to propositions received, not upon grounds of reason, but upon testimony: and they who regard Faith in this light, proceed to lay down that religious Faith is an intellectual assent to certain truths, beyond the reach of reason, concerning God, and his will, and his dealings toward mankind, delivered by inspired witnesses, whose inspiration is proved by the evidence of miracles. Now assuredly such a definition of Faith, instead of affording us any insight into its mighty workings, —instead of enabling us to conceive and understand how it can be ordained to act such a leading part in the moral and spiritual regeneration of man,—only makes the mystery still more mysterious, still more incomprehensible, and utterly repugnant to everything we know of man, whether from searching our own hearts, or from observing the conduct of others. Man's intellect has indeed great power over all outward things. This we are not disposed to question. In these days more especially we all take far too much pride in it, and make presumptuous boast of it, nay, are apt to fall down and worship it, as the one great miracle-worker, the true mover of mountains. But powerful as it may be, omnipotent as we may deem it to be, over the world around us, over the outward fields of nature, there is one region where our hearts and consciences tell us, sometimes in half-muttered whispers, sometimes in cries of anguish and agony, that it is almost powerless: and that region is the dim, visionary, passion-haunted one within our own breasts. We all know but too

well, — every one whose life has not flowed away in listless inanity,—every one who has ever struggled against the evil within him, must have felt but too deeply, that our intellectual convictions, clear and strong as they may have been, have never of themselves been able to shake the foundations of a single sin, to subdue a single vice, to root out a single evil habit. Ever since that severing of the heart from the intellect, which took place when man gave himself up to the lust of godless knowledge, the Passions have made mock at the Understanding, whenever it has attempted to controll them, and have only flattered and pampered it, when it was content to wear their livery, and to drudge in their service; while the Will has lifted up its head against the Understanding in haughty defiance and scorn. Moreover this lesson, which we learn from our own grievous experience, is confirmed by all the evidence of history; where, in example after example, we see, how vain and impotent the enlightening of the understanding has been to elevate and purify man's moral being; and how, unless that enlightenment has been working together with other healthier powers, and been kept in check by them, its operation on the character of nations has rather been to weaken and dissipate their energies, to crumble the primitive rock into sand.

It might be argued indeed, that the exaltation of Faith tends to the humiliation of the intellect, as implying that the highest spiritual truths are undiscoverable by any exercise of man's natural faculties. Something too like a judicial retributive order may be discerned in the arrangement, that, as the attempt of the intellect to soar out of its proper sphere brought about man's fall, so the abasement of the intellect should be the means of raising him again,—

that, as its rebellion against God's declared law cut him off from God, so its submission to God's revealed word should be a preliminary step to his reunion with God. And doubtless this is quite true, so far as the intellectual process is undeniably a main constituent in every act of Faith. The subjection of the self-relying, isolating Understanding, which would fain draw all truth out of itself, is a portion of that sacrifice of our carnal self-centred nature, which must precede the birth of a higher spirit. But is this all? Can this be all that is meant by Faith? Is it possible that the Faith by which man is to be justified, the Faith by which the world is to be overcome, should be nothing more than the assent of the intellect to the truths revealed in the Scriptures? How is that assent to act upon the heart, to stir it, to new-mould it? How can this be, my brethren? What testimony do your hearts, do your consciences give upon this point? Do they not cry aloud, — *Time after time our Understandings have seen and acknowledged many of the truths of the Gospel; we have been thoroughly satisfied of their truth; we have not felt the slightest disposition to question it: but our convictions have availed us nothing: they have past like wind through an archway: our conduct has been unchanged: our hearts have continued unmoved, torpid, dead . . . dead as the lifeless carcase in which Galvanism for a moment awakens a shadow and semblance of life.*

Can Faith, I ask, be nothing more than an operation of the Understanding? At least the word seems ill chosen. For even when we speak of Faith as manifested in our intercourse with our neighbours, — when we talk of putting Faith in one another, — the moral action of the Will is a stronger element in that Faith, than the judicial exercise

of the Understanding. Indeed a Faith which was merely a belief founded on the calculations of the Understanding, would be no Faith at all. It would want that very quality which is absolutely essential to all Faith, and which makes it what it is. For in all Faith there must be confidence, there must be reliance, there must be trust. The intellectual conviction may be indistinct; the grounds for it may be feeble, may never have been duly examined. Very strong Faith in one man may rest upon weak grounds; while that of another may be frail and tottering, though based on irrefragable certainty. But in proportion as our confidence, as our trust, is firm and stedfast, so is our Faith: wherefore this, and not the intellectual belief, is the formative principle in Faith. In like manner, if we examine the other worldly senses of the word, *Faith*, we shall find that the moral ingredient in them predominates over the intellectual. Can it be then, that the Gospel, the dealings of which are almost wholly with man's moral nature, — the aim of which is not to elevate and ennoble his Understanding, but his moral nature, — the doctrine of which is, that the way to the knowledge of spiritual truth lies not through thought and reasoning, but mainly through action and endurance, — should leave out, nay, cast out the moral element in the faculty to which it addresses its primary appeal? That this cannot be so, becomes nearly certain, when we look at the word in the Greek original, which we render by *faith*. In that word, as every reader of Greek knows, the leading idea is that of confidence, of reliance, of trust. Only in a secondary sense does it come to be used for intellectual belief; and even then it mostly implies an admixture more or less of moral confidence. The same too is the case with the Hebrew word answering to that which

in the New Testament we render by *faith*, and by the corresponding verb, *to believe*. And this explains how it comes to pass that in our Version of the Old Testament we so seldom find mention of Faith. The idea is there, and of perpetual occurrence, though not spoken of under the form of a general abstract proposition. Nor could it well be wanting in a book treating of the relations between man and God; Faith being the only faculty whereby man can be conscious of such a relation. The word however, by which that idea is exprest in the Old Testament, is rendered in our Version by *trust*. I should have to repeat a large part of the book of Psalms, were I to cite all the passages in which we are exhorted to trust in God. *The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants; and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate* (xxxiv. 22). *Trust in the Lord, and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land* (xxxvii. 3). *Commit thy way to the Lord; trust in him; and he will bring it to pass* (5). *The Lord will save them; because they trust in him* (40). It will hardly be questioned, that the state of feeling designated in these passages by the expression, *trusting in the Lord*, is very nearly akin to what in the religion of the New Covenant bears the name of Faith. For trusting in God must needs imply a belief in him: only this belief may be a more general one in his goodness and providential care; whereas the belief and the Faith of a Christian centre in the specific act of the redemption wrought for him by Christ. Hereby his belief becomes a more definite and prominent element in his Faith. Indeed it is a general characteristic of the scriptural view of man, that the intellectual part of his being is hardly ever regarded, according to the abstractions of human philosophy, as distinct and separate

from his moral nature. Light in the Bible is life; and life is light: knowledge is indeed power: if true knowledge, it is power for good; if false, for evil: and one or the other it must be: for no act of a living responsible soul can be of a neutral negative character: that which is not with God, is against him. This appears, — to refer to one proof among hundreds, — from the description of Wisdom, according to its twofold origin and nature, given in the Epistle of St James; where the Wisdom which descendeth not from above, is said to be *worldly, carnal, devilish;* while the true Wisdom, which is from above, is set forth in its heavenly beauty, as *pure, peaceful, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy;* every quality ascribed to each being wholly of a moral and practical character.

Here perhaps it may not be altogether idle to remark, that the poverty and want of formative power in our language, in which there is no verb manifestly belonging to the same family with *Faith*, by leading us to have recourse to the verb *believe*, which in its ordinary acceptation expresses an act almost purely intellectual, has helpt to foster the erroneous notion, that in Faith also the intellectual act is all in all. The verb, *believe*, being far more widely spread and connected in our language, has drawn away its corresponding substantive, *Faith*, from its more appropriate meaning; instead of adopting that meaning, as it ought to have done. So likewise in the Latin verb, *credo*, which tended much to determine the signification of *fides*, the notion of the intellectual act is more prominent than in the Greek πιστεύω.

Hence it was with the fullest right that Luther and

Melanchthon, when the true idea of Faith and of its power was reasserted at the Reformation, were anxious to urge again and again that *faith is trust*, that *faith signifies trust: fides est fiducia; fides significat fiduciam* (C). This was only to assert, that the faith prescribed in the New Testament is a feeling of the same kind with the trust enjoined in the Old Testament; as is proved,—to take a single instance,—by the passage in the Gospels, where the disciples are frightened by the tempest, while their Master is asleep in the ship, and where, on being awaked by them in their terrour, he rebukes them for their want of Faith (Matth. viii. 26); that is, for their want of trust, for their want of confidence in him. To the same purpose it is well observed by Calvin, that, "if theologians would attend to that passage in the Epistle to the Romans (x. 10), *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*, they would give over talking about their frigid fiction of a *fides formata*: for that, if this passage were our only argument, it should suffice to finish the dispute, proving that the assent of Faith is of the Heart, more than of the Head, and rather of the Affections than of the Understanding" (D). Accordingly, in the *Apology for the Confession of Augsburg*, it is laid down with perfect truth, that "Faith is not merely a perception of the Understanding, but a confidence in the Will, that is, the willing and receiving what is offered to us in God's promise" (E). And this agrees with the definition of Faith given by many of our own most eminent divines; in proof of which I will only refer you to Bishop Taylor's *Discourse on Faith*, where he says in so many words, that "the Faith of a Christian has more in it of the Will than of the Understanding." (F)

To establish and illustrate this truth,—to set forth the kingdom and the power and the glory of Faith, so far as

the Spirit of God shall enable me to look into its mysteries,—and to shew how Faith, under one relation or other, has always been the main agent in whatsoever man has accomplisht toward overcoming the world,—will be the aim of the following sermons. At first thought indeed one might be inclined to suppose, that this elementary principle, lying at the root of all Christian life, no less than of all Christian doctrine, must needs have been fully elucidated long ago. Nevertheless I have deemed that, even in this place, it might not be inexpedient for him who is appointed to preach before you, to bring forth old things as well as new out of his treasure. Nay, this may be the more expedient from the manifold temptations which may here withdraw us from common subjects to matters of abstruser speculation or more learned research. Moreover there are peculiar circumstances in the present condition of the Church, rendering it desirable that men should be reminded of the great truths concerning Faith which were proclaimed in the age of the Reformation. Vital and fundamental as the question touching the true nature of Faith is, there are few questions on which greater and more mischievous errours have prevailed. From the Epistle of St James we perceive that even in those primitive days a party had arisen within the Church, which had stript Faith of its living power, and held that a naked intellectual recognition of the truths delivered in the Gospel was the only thing requisite to salvation. When heresies sprang up, and it became necessary to define the doctrines of the Church by the promulgation of Creeds, as the reception of those Creeds was deemed indispensable to true Christian Faith, that reception, the belief in the doctrines thus ascertained and defined, was held to constitute that Faith, and

was identified therewith. This notion was further promoted by the objective use of the word *Faith*, to signify the sum of those doctrines which are the object of belief, as well as the act whereby the mind and heart receive them (G). Thus, Faith being narrowed to the intellectual operation, and thereby deprived of its moral power, the provinces of Faith and of practical life grew to be regarded as totally distinct; and good works, being disjoined from Faith, were held to require some other source in Hope and Love: which yet themselves can only rise out of Faith. For how can we love, or how can we hope, unless we have already believed in Him whom we love and hope in (H)? The inevitable result of this severance was, that a dead Faith on the one hand was responded to on the other hand by dead works; inasmuch as neither can live, except in union with the other: cut them asunder, and they both die. Such was the deplorable condition of the Church in what are called the middle ages; until Luther, arising with the spirit and power of Elias, lifted up his voice in the wilderness, which in those days was spread over Christendom, and preacht the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone. On this doctrine he rested wholly and solely, esteeming all other things of less account in comparison of Faith in Christ, and confident that all the graces of the kingdom of heaven would spring up in those who have that Faith graven on the living tablets of their hearts. From this doctrine he derived his strength: and then again it was seen, that Faith is indeed the victory which overcometh the world. The bonds and shackles of dead ordinances fell off from those who were baptized with this purificatory fire. But the progress of knowledge and civilization produced its usual effect. The pride of knowledge bred the lust of

knowledge; and the lust of knowledge pampered the pride of knowledge: and again it became a very general opinion that the belief of the Understanding is one and the same thing with Christian Faith; and that this belief is to be grounded on testimony. Hence we were inundated with dissertations on the external evidences of Christianity; in which it was treated like any other historical fact, and witnesses were sifted and cross-examined; but without regard to the main witness, the witness in the heart of the believer himself, in his infirmities, his wants, his cravings,—the witness along with which the Spirit bears witness in groanings that cannot be uttered. This, the only witness on which a living Faith in Christ can be establisht, was left out of sight: and so it is little to be wondered at if the Gospel half melted away into a system of philanthropical morality. From another and a very different quarter also have erroneous notions concerning the nature of Faith been recently propagated with much ability and earnestness by one of whom no reverer of piety and holiness should speak without respect. The main force of the vehement attack which has lately been made on the great protestant and apostolical doctrine of Justification by Faith, seems to lie in a total misconception of the nature and power of Faith (1). Against this misconception, whenever and in whatsoever form it shews itself, it behoves us to keep diligent guard. It behoves us to write the declaration of St Paul on the front of our Church, that *a man is justified by Faith, without the deeds of the Law.* It should be our inwrought conviction, that, as Luther says in the Articles of Schmalcald, after quoting these words of St Paul, "From this article no true Christian ought to depart, or to make any concession or admission contrary

thereto, even though heaven and earth and all things should be confounded" (J).

Now to Him who in His infinite grace vouchsafes to justify mankind by Faith, without the deeds of the Law, whereby no man living could be justified,—to Him who justifies us by clothing us with the righteousness of His only-begotten Son, and who by the indwelling of His Spirit sanctifies those whom He has justified,—in the glory of the eternal Trinity, be all praise and thanksgiving and adoration for ever.

SERMON II.

FAITH, A PRACTICAL PRINCIPLE.

1 John v. 4.
This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

In my former sermon I endeavoured to shew that the Faith, which is here said to have the power of overcoming the world, and of which such great and wonderful things are declared in other passages of the New Testament, by St Paul, and by our Saviour himself, must be something very different from that mere intellectual assent to the truths of revelation, with which it has often been identified. One main, and, as appears to me, decisive proof that it must be so, is the powerlessness of the Understanding to produce any lasting renovating effect on the heart and soul of man. And are we not led to the same conclusion by those blessed words, so full of grace and love, in which our Lord gives thanks to his Heavenly Father, *because he has hidden his salvation from the wise and prudent, and has revealed it to babes?* Had the decision of the Understanding, the balancing of evidence, the cross-examination of witnesses, been the grounds on which Faith is to be founded, — had the work of Faith been wholly a work of the Intellect, — were there not a moral blindness, which will often disable the keenest Intellect for discerning the true meaning and spirit of what it sees, and a moral openness of heart by which the simple are fitted for seeing

things as they really are, — the wise and prudent, as they are the best judges in matters of earthly science, would also be the best judges in heavenly science. As they alone rightly conceive the true system of the universe, while the unlearned continue all their lives deceived by the phantoms of the Senses, in like manner should we have found a readier and fuller apprehension of the divine nature and atonement of Christ in the philosopher than in the peasant. Whereas the fact is very often exactly the reverse. The philosopher, beguiled by the phantoms of his Understanding, finds it difficult, if not impossible, to raise his spirit beyond the moral teacher, the man Jesus; while the poor and humble acknowledge and adore him, as their ever-present Saviour and God. One can hardly talk with the poor on any spiritual subject, without being sensible of this difference. They receive the truths of the Gospel, as young children receive what is said to them, not with their Understandings merely, but into their Hearts. The same thing is implied in our Lord's words to Thomas. Had the conviction of the Understanding been the one thing needful in Faith, the stronger and more immediate the evidence, the more valuable would the conviction have been. But inasmuch as it is the moral readiness to receive and embrace truth, that renders Faith acceptable in the eyes of God, therefore did our Lord pronounce that those who believe without seeing are blessed, above those who will not believe until they see. Were not this so, what would be the meaning of St Paul's declaration (1 Cor. i. 17), that he had been sent to preach the Gospel, *not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.* Had the purpose for which he was to preach the Gospel been chiefly to convince the

Understanding, the wisdom of words would have been the very means the best fitted for accomplishing it. But, seeing that the main seat of Faith is not in the Understanding, but in the Will and the Affections, — seeing that, according to the words already quoted, it is *with the Heart that man believeth unto righteousness*, — seeing that God, when he demands our Faith, calls upon us to give him our Hearts, — therefore, as we often find that men of a subtile Intellect are feeble in their Affections, and ill-fitted for action, — as the earthly lights with which they surround themselves, are apt to dazzle their eyes, and to keep them from looking out and beholding the light in the heavens, — St Paul here warns us of a truth, which it is of great importance that, in this place more especially, we should be strongly imprest with, namely, that the wisdom of words may too easily hinder our Faith, that it may involve us in a glittering mist which will prevent our discerning the Cross in its pure and heavenly glory. Thus it came to pass that the Cross of Christ was not only a stumblingblock to the Jews, who were deluded by the phantoms of their Senses and of their carnal Affections, but also to the Greeks, who were equally under a delusion from the phantoms of their carnal Understanding.

Every one's recollection may supply him with a number of passages of a like purport. To refer to a different class, by which the same truth is establisht, — when our Saviour commends the Faith of the centurion at Capernaum, and that of the Syrophenician woman, when he rewards that of the woman with the issue of blood, and that of the persons who let down the man sick of the palsy from the roof into the court before him, — surely it was not on account of the intellectual conviction apparent in those acts of Faith, that

he spoke so graciously of them. Rather was it on account of the power which the intellectual conviction exercised in each of these cases to produce acts conformable to it, — on account of the earnestness and energy with which these persons laid hold on the truth they had discerned, — on account of their confidence, their trust, their boldness, in striving, undeterred by doubts or fears, by hindrances or obstacles, to gain and appropriate the blessing of which they had seen the prospect. In all these instances it is plain that the Faith which finds favour with our Lord, answers much more nearly to trust or confidence, than to what we usually mean by *belief:* and that this is its true character, we have seen, is establisht by the usual meaning of the original Greek word, as well as by the corresponding term in the Old Testament. So that Luther and the other Reformers were fully warranted, when, in consequence of the ambiguity attacht to the word *fides*, and of the errour which that ambiguity had helpt to propagate, they were not only careful to lay down that it meant and was equivalent to *fiducia*, but often in their ordinary language substituted *fiducia* in its stead. This too, it is needful we should keep in mind, is still the point of main importance, — not the intellectual assent to the truths of the Gospel, but the practical hearty apprehension of them, manifesting itself as at once the regulative and the constitutive principle of our lives; — the going humbly to the Saviour, whom we have been taught to acknowledge, and beseeching him that, unworthy as we are that he should enter into us, until we have been purified and sanctified by his Spirit, he would yet speak the word and heal us; — the being instant in entreating that he would at least feed us with the crumbs which fall from his table; — the pressing

forward, in spite of everything that would check or hinder us, if so be we may but touch the hem of his garment; — or, if our hearts are too palsied to take any step toward him of our own accord, the beseeching our faithful friends to carry us into his presence, that he may perchance be moved by their Faith to bid us arise and walk.

Hence we see that nothing can well be more fallacious than the notion that Faith is not a practical principle. So palpable indeed does the erroneousness of that notion appear to me, that I should scarcely deem it requisite to argue the point, unless that erroneous doctrine had been so broadly asserted in the recent *Lectures on Justification*, to which I have already referred (K). When we call to mind how our Lord himself tells us of Faith, that it can *move mountains*, and that *nothing shall be impossible to it*, — when we bethink ourselves of St John's declaration, that it is *the victory which overcometh the world*,—when we cast our eyes over the long list of heroic exploits, which in the Epistle to the Hebrews are said to have been wrought by Faith,—it would seem almost inconceivable how so learned and thoughtful and pious a writer could have denied the practical power of Faith; unless one knew, from the experience of one's own heart, as well as from observation of others, how easily we are beguiled into straining and warping the strongest evidence and testimony, for the sake of upholding a favorite preconceived opinion. Were Faith nothing more than the assent of the Understanding, then indeed we should be forced to grant that it is not a practical principle. But this consequence of itself is enough to prove how totally inadequate that definition of Faith must be. In truth, if we look thoughtfully through the history of the Church, or even of the world, we shall find that this, under

one shape or other, has ever been the main principle and spring of all great and magnanimous action, even Faith. The persons in whose character Love has been the predominant feature, have not seldom been disposed to rest in heavenly meditations and contemplations. Unless too it be corrected and nerved by Faith, Love shrinks from giving pain, from giving offense. But the great stirring motive spirits in the history of the world, *the angels who have excelled in strength, and who have done God's commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word,* have been those who by way of eminence may be called the heroes of Faith, those who by Faith have dwelt in the immediate presence of God; in proof whereof I will only remind you for the present of those two great captains in God's noble army, Paul and Luther. Nor is it difficult to perceive why this is and must be so. For Faith, and Faith alone, gives us the very thing which Archimedes wanted, the standing-place out of the world, and above the world, whence the world is to be moved. He who lives in a spiritual world, will desire, in proportion to the vividness and fulness of that life, to realize that spiritual world in the world of forms and shadows which he sees around him. He will desire to impress others with the truths, by which he himself is strongly possest, — to rescue them from the debasement, from which he himself has been delivered, — to make them partakers in the priceless blessings, which he himself is enjoying. His Faith will inspire him with courage, and will gain him fresh supplies of strength from above: and it will carry him fearless through all dangers, while he says to his heart in the sublime words of the Psalmist: *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and*

though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moved. God will help her, and that right early. Thus, by giving a substantial reality to that which is invisible, to that which is no object of the Senses, or of the natural Understanding, and by animating the Heart with a firm unshakable assurance of that for which it looks in hope, Faith performs the task assigned to her of overcoming the world.

It has often been urged indeed, even by persons of great learning and authority, that the wellknown passage in the Epistle of St James is a proof that Faith, in the Bible, means nothing more than mere belief, which of itself and by itself is quite powerless (L). That passage is the main, and almost the sole, Scriptural prop of the opinion I have been contending against: and some writers have even maintained that St James expressly designed to limit and qualify the expressions made use of by St Paul. Nay, it has been assumed that there is an opposition and repugnance between the two statements concerning the conditions of Justification: and one school of theologians has sided with the one apostle, one with the other, according to their several predilections. Grievous would it be to believe that Christ was thus divided, that his apostles themselves should have set the example of rending his vesture in sunder. But it has been shewn, I think, satisfactorily, by the excellent historian of the Apostolical Church, that the appearances, on the strength of which it has been held that the Bishop of Jerusalem, where he treats of the relation between Faith and Works, must be

speaking with reference to the Apostle of the Gentiles, or at least to some perversion of his doctrine, are fallacious, and that he was merely reproving certain mischievous errours with regard to Faith, which were prevalent among the Jewish Christians (M). As their fathers under the Law had been so apt to assume that outward rites and observances, and an outward acknowledgement of the Law were sufficient to justify them,—nay, that the mere fact of their being the children of Abraham entitled them to the blessings of the promise,—so, even under the law of the Spirit, would they too readily fall back into a kindred delusion, and presume that, if with their lips they confest Jesus to be the Christ, they might claim a share in his salvation. Hence the Apostle, inasmuch as he is writing to persons by whom Faith was regarded as nothing more than an intellectual belief, and who in their practice debased it still further into the mere outward profession of such a belief, deeming, or rather cheating their consciences with the fancy, that such a profession would gain them an entrance into the kingdom of heaven,—his aim and purpose, like that of his brethren, being, not to define terms philosophically, or to lay open the secrets of man's internal structure, but to enforce practical truth,—has in some measure adopted the usage of the persons he was addressing. This accords with the constant habit of the Sacred Writers. Their commission being to declare great moral and spiritual truths, they uttered those truths in the forms of thought and language already current among their hearers; even though their expressions might now and then be at variance with the subsequent more accurate discoveries of science. Nor is it easy to see how they could have done otherwise: for, as has been well observed, even

if God had granted them an insight into the whole framework and order of his creation, they would either have had to speak unintelligibly, when their language was repugnant to the notions then received; or it would have been necessary to charge them with a special revelation of those physical and metaphysical truths, which were lying coiled up in the heart of the universe, and which man was only to draw forth by a slow gradual process of evolution (N). Such being the ordinary practice of the Sacred Writers, and the two conceptions, of a moral faith and an intellectual belief, being so apt to slide into one another, as the whole history of the Church has proved,—whence the same term has been habitually employed to designate the latter conception as well as the former,—St James in one instance uses the verb *believe*, applying it to the spirits of evil, where it means little more than an intellectual conviction, or at least a conviction which does not exercise any hallowing influence upon the Will. Yet even in this passage Faith is not represented as continuing in mere notional unreality. It does not lie like .... I know not by what image to express the inanimateness of a bare intellectual belief: for in the outward world there is nothing, not a dead leaf, not a straw, not even a grain of dust, which is not connected with the rest of the universe by manifold bonds of mutual action: there is nothing in the outward world so torpid, so insulated, as a conviction of the Understanding lying amid the lumber of a paralysed Intellect. Even when speaking of the devils, the Apostle does not say that they *believe* and remain unmoved, but that they *believe and tremble.* So that this passage itself does not altogether bear out the notion of an inanimate Faith; while it utters an awful warning to those who

allow their Faith to linger in shadowy spectral lifelessness: it warns them that their Faith too will hereafter be quickened by sight: but the effect of this quickening will not be joy and peace and hope in believing: that Faith, which is not clothed with the righteousness of the Son of God, will start up in the likeness of the devil's faith, and tremble.

Even apart however from this consideration, it is surely contrary to sound principles of interpretation, to make the meaning of the word *believe* in this passage, where it is applied to spirits of whose nature and essence and relations we know next to nothing, the canon for determining the meaning of Faith in that multitude of passages where it is applied to man, and where the peculiar meaning is inconsistent with the context, and can only be foisted in by assuming that the word *faith*, in the common language of the New Testament, is not used appropriately, but stands for a complex act, of which it is merely one, and that not the most important element (o). Not that anything would be gained for the argument by such an assumption; the question being, not whether the word *faith* is used appropriately or inappropriately by St Paul and in the Gospels, but what is the idea there exprest by that word, and to which such great moment is ascribed. Surely too we are not to measure the things which we know, by the things which we know not; but contrariwise to guess at the things which we know not, from the things which we know. The ladder of our human discourse and reasoning must rest on the earth: we cannot hook it into the sky. Even in speaking of himself, God has clothed himself in the attributes of humanity: nor can we conceive what those attributes mean in their heavenly exaltation, except by

considering in the first instance what they mean in their earthly debasement.

Besides, even though we were to confine our enquiry to the Epistle of St James, in endeavouring to ascertain the apostolical idea of Faith, that Epistle of itself contains ample evidence that Christian Faith is something far higher, something that lies far deeper, than any mere act of the Understanding. For what is the point on which the Apostle mainly insists? That Faith without works is dead (P). Faith without works is a dead Faith, not a living,—a nominal Faith, not a real,—the shadow of Faith, not the substance. And why is this? except because Faith, if it be living, if it be real, if it be substantial, is a practical principle, a practical power; nay, of all principles, of all powers, by which man can be actuated, the most practical: so that, when it does not shew forth its life by good works, we may reasonably conclude that it is dead; just as we infer that a body is dead, when it has ceast to move; or that a tree is dead, when it puts forth no leaves. Not that the works constitute the life of Faith, or contribute in the slightest degree to impart life to it (Q); any more than motion constitutes or imparts the life of the body, or than leaves constitute or impart the life of the tree. On the contrary it is from the living principle of Faith, that they must receive their life; without which they would be utterly dead, and mere dross and scum and rubbish: nay, unless they spring from Faith, instead of fostering, they overlay and stifle it. But they are its indispensable tokens, its never-failing fruits, whereby alone its reality can be ascertained: they are no less necessary to its health, growth, and vigour, than motion to that of the body: and like leaves they feed and strengthen

the life they spring from. The comparison, with which the Apostle winds up his discourse upon Faith,—*as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*,—might indeed occasion some perplexity; unless we bear in mind that he is reproving a notion that the nominal profession of faith in Christ is sufficient to absolve its professors from every moral obligation. When contrasted with mere hollow words, even outward actions have something like life in them. But it would be straining this illustration unwarrantably, to infer from it that the Apostle meant to lay down, that the relation which Faith bears to works, is like that of the body to the spirit. Few sources of errour have been more copious than the propensity to realize images, and to deduce general propositions from partial illustrations. The whole tenour of the New Testament establishes, that Faith is the invisible living spirit, which pours its life through the body of works, manifesting itself therein, and striving to bring all God's creatures to the obedience of Faith, to the end that they may be clothed with the righteousness of Faith.

From what has been said, it will easily be seen how important and precious was the truth reasserted at the Reformation, that the main seat of Faith is not in the Understanding, but in the Will. Not that Faith is a mongrel principle, neither one thing, nor the other, but a medley of the two. Were it so, it could never have the living vivifying power ascribed to it. Every genuine act of Faith is the act of the whole man, not of his Understanding alone, not of his Affections alone, not of his Will alone, but of all three in their central aboriginal unity. It proceeds from the inmost depths of the soul, (R) from beyond that firmament of Consciousness, whereby the waters under the firmament

are divided from the waters above the firmament. It is the act of that living principle, which constitutes each man's individual, continuous, immortal personality. Here, as in so many other cases, much confusion has arisen from the necessities of the Understanding to distinguish, in order that it may apprehend, what it would else be unable to comprehend. To facilitate the conception of the manifold intellectual and moral workings of our souls, we ascribe them to distinct powers or faculties: and then, beguiled by our own craft, we take our ciphers for realities, and are apt to fancy that these powers or faculties are things essentially and substantially different, bundled and fagoted together for the occasion in the complex unit, man. Whereas they ought rather to be regarded as different manifestations of the same one indivisible spirit, acting diversely according to its various purposes and relations,—as different diverging rays of the same central star. It is true, this original unity of our nature seldom shews itself forth in our present fallen estate. The primary stem having been cut down, the root merely sends up a number of lesser stems; and instead of lofty forests mounting heavenward, we see little among mankind but thickets of underwood that just rise above the ground. Indeed this our divided condition is the main cause of our weakness. While our Conscience, our Understanding, our Affections, and our carnal Appetites are dragging us in opposite directions, the Will is torn and mangled, and almost dismembered: and from this misery nothing can save us, except the atoning power of Faith.

Bearing this in mind, we perceive how every act of Faith, as the act of a man's whole personality, will be single; and that there is no confusion of thought, no mixing

up of incongruous elements, in saying that it is not the act of the Understanding alone, but of the Understanding, and still more emphatically and essentially of the Will. If it were the act of the Understanding alone, it would be the act of a fraction of man's being. Only as the act of the Will, mainly and primarily, is it the act of the whole man. Hereby alone is it an act for which we can feel and acknowledge ourselves to be accountable. Hereby alone does it become an act of such a kind, that we can conceive how by its exercise, when applied to its right Object, and thus endowed with a higher life and a supernatural power, the great and deadly wound in our nature should be healed, how by it we should be enabled to cross the chasm which since the Fall has severed us from God. Nor will any one who is at all in the habit of reflecting on his own inward workings, — of considering what he does when he thinks, or when he gives the rein to any of his affections, or when he wills to realize any of his thoughts or feelings in action, — no one who is at all accustomed to observe himself in the mirror of his own consciousness, will scruple to allow that an act may be simple and single, although it require the coincident activity of several of what we are wont to regard as distinct powers. The very same happens, for instance, in almost every act of thought. Almost every such act will involve processes of perception, of apprehensive imagination, of abstraction and generalization, of memory, of reasoning, too rapid, it may be, and evanescent to excite observation, but still indispensable preliminaries to the completion of the particular thought. In like manner every utterance of feeling toward an outward object must needs imply sundry processes of the perceptive and reflective powers. Nor can there be any action of the

Will, except where the object it acts upon has been presented to it through the medium of the Intellect, and has at least awakened a ripple on the slumbering surface of the Heart. So that there is nothing beyond the specious shadow of an argument in the objection which has been urged against the account of Faith given by the Reformers, on the ground that its seat cannot be at once in the Understanding and in the Will (s). For how can the Will of an intellectual being ever act, except in some sort of concert, more or less, with his Understanding? how, as was just now observed, can it act outwardly, on outward objects, except where some notice of the objects has been conveyed to it by those faculties, which are the medium of its intercourse with the outward world? How can we believe, except in Him of whom we have heard, of whom we have been informed, in whom we have seen some grounds, more or less convincing, for believing? We must hear of Christ with our outward ears, before the sound of his voice can reach our hearts. Thus *Faith*, as the Apostle says, *comes by hearing.* In a certain sense the outward act must be prior in order of time to the inward. In like manner, if we advance a step further, a certain kind of intellectual perception and recognition of Christ and of his work must be prior in order of time to the moral and spiritual apprehension of it by the Heart and the Will. Hence, as we are ever apt to confound antecedence in order of time with antecedence in order of causation, transferring the relations of one category to the other, it is often assumed, especially by those who are more conversant with intellectual speculations, than with the practical life and workings of Faith, that the intellectual act is the cause which produces the moral, that, as being the cause, it is of higher dignity and

importance than the effect, and accordingly that it is the main point toward which our attention is to be directed.

In truth this itself was the bent and sway and warp, which our nature received at the Fall, that we were driven aslant from all spiritual things, and grew in everything to lean toward the material, the carnal, the objects of the senses. Our Thoughts are ever dwelling on outward things, and are mostly content to serve as clerks in the countinghouse of the Senses: and it is only with labour and difficulty, and after a long discipline and training, that we can fix them steadily on the world within us. Our Affections have become the minions of our Appetites, cleave to the dust, nay, will feast and fatten themselves by feeding on the dead body of Sin. Even our Philosophy, with all its vaunted superiority to sense and to outward things, has often wasted its powers on the humiliating attempt to make out that the spiritual world is no better than an essence or elixir drained off from the material, that thoughts are merely the shadows and ghosts of sensations. While our bodily eyes are incessantly exercised, from morning till night, from the earliest dawn of childhood till everything becomes faint and dim beneath the dusk of old age, in looking curiously and anxiously about and around us, the inward eyes of Consciousness and Conscience require to be purged and unscaled before they will even open, — yea, to be purged and unscaled at the fountain of heavenly radiance, before they can discern the true form and colour and value of spiritual objects. Hence Philosophy has ever been apt to forget the perceptive powers in the objects perceived; more especially in the later ages of intellectual culture, when those objects are so multiplied by the growth of luxury, the widening of

experience, and the progress of science, as to overlay every other consideration. And even when it turns its attention to examine the perceptive powers themselves, it scarcely looks beyond the secondary, derivative, and subordinate ones, and paddles about in the waters which lie on this side of the firmament of Consciousness, without thinking of diving into the waters beyond it. In this manner it has come to pass with regard to Faith also, that the outward act of intellectual belief, — outward with reference to that moral Will, which is the central principle of our being, — has grown to be regarded as the main and most important part of Faith, nay, to be talkt of as the one sole principle, which, strongly as all experience and observation repell such an assertion, forms the groundwork of the Christian life.

Yet, even as to priority in point of time, if we look closely into the question, we shall see that the primary germinal act must be that of the Will, not of the Understanding. There must be some motion of the Will, however slight, which in the first instance directs the application of the Understanding to an object, before that object can be introduced through the Understanding to act upon the Will. The flower must open by an act of its own, before the sunbeams can enter into it: and though it opens under the warmth of those very rays, which, before they gain an entrance, lie fosteringly around it, still, unless there were a living principle in the plant, the warmth of the sun would no more unfold the blossoms, than it can open an artificial bud, or a painted one. So again every fresh operation of the Understanding requires a fresh exercise of the Will, determining, directing, prolonging, or diverting its attention: and the more definite and

comprehensive the object, the greater effort of the Will is requisite to embrace it. Hereby we may be assisted in some degree to conceive how the influences of the Spirit should be of such momentous power in the work of our Faith, — in producing it from the very first, and afterward in nourishing and maturing it. Were Faith merely an act of the Understanding, it would lie without that region which is the peculiar sphere of the Spirit. At least His ordinary influences, those which are promist to every believer, and in which whosoever is baptized into the name of Christ has a share, do not seem to extend to the illumination of the Understanding; except so far as the Understanding is necessarily elevated and enlightened by the purification of the Heart, and the sanctification of the Will, by a singleness of view in pursuit of truth, an inward harmony with it, and an unhesitating readiness to adopt it. So far however as Faith is a spiritual act, so far as it is the act of the Will, which Christ came to redeem from the bondage of the flesh, we may feel assured that, in every act of spiritual Faith, in every act by which we evince a desire to become partakers in Christ's redeeming grace, to shake off the yoke of corruption, and to strive after the glorious liberty of the children of God, — in every such act, we may feel assured, the Spirit of God will be working along with our spirits.

Moreover a right insight into the nature of Faith, as depending far more on the Will, than on the Understanding, will teach us the groundlessness and fallaciousness of a proposition, which has often been promulgated with great pretensions to philosophical candour and freedom of thought, that no man is accountable for his belief; for that it does not depend upon himself, but wholly on the

evidence by which he has been led to form and entertain it. Sad would it be to think, that Truth is thus to vary with the accidents of condition and circumstance, nay, of chance and caprice in the mind of the receiver: sad would it be to think that there is no better and surer answer than this, which man is bound to render to Pilate's question; sad, that each man should return a different answer, and that there should be no criteria for deciding amongst them; sad, that the crowning result of all knowledge should be to run races blindfold in Chaos. But a very slight attention to the processes of our own minds, to the growth of our own opinions, — nay, even to the manner in which we arrive at our conclusions with regard to any one particular point, though no more than a mere question of fact, — might convince us that there is hardly anything wherein our volition exercises so decisive an influence, as in this very matter of the formation of our opinion and belief. Or we need only look at any controversy in which men's feelings, as political partisans, are engaged, to see how persons equally discreet and sagacious, and fancying themselves equally impartial, will habitually frame totally opposite judgements. For in every practical question the Will gives the mind its bias; and the Will is the arch-sophist, and is ever attended by a swarm of lesser sophists in its train. It in great measure determines the degree of attention which we bestow on the several parts of contradictory evidence, the weight which we attach to them. We dwell almost unconsciously on that which favours and flatters our prepossessions; we welcome such arguments like old friends, and entertain them with openhearted hospitality; while it requires no little effort and struggle not to turn away and close our doors against that which

thwarts or contradicts us. Hence even for our intellectual judgements we may justly be held responsible; the more so the more intimately those judgements are connected with our practical lives. What then? Is this warping bent, this squint of our Understandings, to be corrected and to pass away all at once, the moment we begin to employ them in the examination of religious doctrines? Are there no prepossessions in the heart, to rise up against these truths, and to draw us away from them? Do not our sins shrink from them? do not our passions scoff at them? Has the intellect forgotten its craft, and cast away its snares? has it escaped from the entanglement of its own sophistries? Is it set free from the slough, which confined it to crawl along the earth? Is the mystery of the Cross no longer a stumbling-block to the Jew, no longer foolishness to the Greek? Yet, shallow and baseless as this notion is, I doubt not there are many in these days, who buoy themselves up in their carelessness about their own Faith, and about the Faith of their brethren, by crying out that no man can be held accountable for his Faith; for that we believe what we believe, through the compulsion which the evidence set before us exercises on our Understanding, according to laws beyond our controll; that we can neither alter the character of the evidence, nor its power over our minds; and consequently that, if we go wrong, we cannot help it. Such a doctrine, even with regard to mere intellectual belief, implies the barest rankest necessarianism: and when applied to Faith, in its higher more spiritual sense, it is utterly untenable, except in connexion with a scheme of opinions which undermines all morality, and would blot out the eternal distinction between right and wrong. It is a duty of charity indeed to

refrain from pronouncing harsh judgement on the Faith of our neighbours; seeing that we cannot look into their hearts, and ascertain how far they may be truly accountable for it,—that we cannot know the manifold hindrances outward and inward they may have had to contend against: nor can we tell whether there may not be a living root of Faith striking deep underground, even where as yet there is little show of life aboveground. Therefore is it reasonable and just, that we should refrain from condemning others for errours in Faith; provided that this toleration do not slacken our efforts to deliver them from their errours, lest perchance they should be accountable for them; as, if we do not endeavour to check them, we ourselves at least shall be. But into our own hearts we can look,—not indeed through and through them,—not so as to unravel all the network of falsehood and selfdeceit in which they are entangled,—not so as to pierce into all the hollow caverns of vanity and pride, into which our Consciences will skulk: to see all this we need to have our eyes purged and strengthened by the Spirit of God. So far however we can look into ourselves, as to discern much, very much that is wrong, much that is frail, much that is bloated, much emptiness, much self-indulgence, much sloth: and on this point I dare appeal to you all, confident that there is no one among you who will presume to assert, that he has done all he might have done, all he ought to have done,—might I not say, who has done a thousandth part of what he might and ought to have done?—in order to attain to a right faith in the Gospel. What may be the case with others, we know not: but with regard to ourselves, every one of us must confess, *Verily on this point I am guilty: verily I am accountable*

for my Faith, for its wants, for its weakness, for its errours.

I have dwelt much longer than I had intended on this fundamental question of the practical nature of Faith; because the more one examines it, the more momentous its importance is discovered to be; and at every step some new mischievous fallacy or delusion starts up, springing out of errours with regard to it. We saw, from a brief glance at the history of the Church, how a lifeless conception of Faith led to torpour in the Church, and how the revival of the true idea of Faith was the forerunner and a main agent in its regeneration. The men of God in those days knew what Faith was. They lookt into their hearts, and found it there. They knew its lifegiving sustaining power. They knew how, when it walks abroad over the earth, it goes on conquering, and still to conquer. But when the struggle was over, when the victory was gained, doctrines after a time again became a matter of mere speculation: yea, alas! even Christianity itself was often regarded and discust as a matter of mere speculation; as though the eternal Son of God had come down from heaven for no worthier purpose than that men should sharpen their wits by disputing about him. In this manner it again grew to be held that Faith is little more than the assent of the Understanding to the truths proposed to it. And still, even in these days, two opposite errours with regard to the nature of Faith are widely spread, by both of which the souls of men are equally drawn away from the hallowing power of the Gospel. One of these is the Antinomian errour; which, bewildering and blinding itself with fantastical extravagant notions about the omnipotence of bare Faith, severs Faith from that holiness of conduct which is

its rightful offspring and effect, thus in fact rendering it barren and powerless; and which, forgetting that Faith is the root of the Christian life, would invert the order of that life, making it strike root upward, and bear fruit downward. *Its vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall; their clusters are bitter: their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.* This however is an errour against which it would be needless to warn any one in this congregation. For it is an errour from which in this place we are guarded by manifold fences of custom and opinion, and by the respect our situation and station enforce upon us for the decencies and proprieties of life. Whatever may be the snares or incitements by which men are here drawn into sin, no one assuredly will run into it in order that grace may abound.

But there is also another errour with regard to Faith,—even the errour which I have been combating through the whole of this sermon,—the notion that Faith is mere belief, that it is nothing more than an operation and act of the Understanding: and to this errour, I know not whether in a place like this, we are not more peculiarly exposed. Let me not be thought presumptuous, brethren, if I address this warning more especially to you. I speak as one who has spent a large portion of his life, more than twenty of its best years, among you; as one who knows and feels what great reason he has for thankfulness on account of the many precious blessings he was here allowed to enjoy, in the tranquil seclusion from the cares and turmoil of the world, from its emulation and contention, its wear and tear, its ceaseless chase after honour and gain, — in the rich opportunities and aids here afforded for study and

meditation,—in the daily intercourse with dear and honoured friends, able and ever ready to help, to encourage, to guide, to strengthen, drawing us forward by their advice, and still more by the light of their examples. O yes, my brethren! many and precious are the blessings, which are poured out upon you in this ancient seat of learning: the vision of them has returned with unwonted power upon me, now that, after an absence of years, I am come back to my former much-loved home, enabled by comparison more fully to appreciate your peculiar privileges and advantages. Much cause too have you for thankfulness on account of the many temptations from which you are preserved. But there is no earthly lot, which has not its accompanying temptations, no earthly blessing, which may not prove a snare, if we allow it to occupy us too exclusively, and to draw off our affections and energies from other fields of duty. It is a great privilege and happiness, that you should be permitted, nay, that it should be your special business and charge, to live in a world of thought, to go forth through time and space, seeking out and holding daily converse with all that is most beautiful and excellent in the works of man and of God. Great however as is the delight of such studies and speculations,—and great it is, and pure and noble, when contrasted with most other objects of human endeavour,—the more easily for this very reason may they beguile us into forgetting that such studies and speculations are not the highest aim of man's being,—into forgetting that there can be anything in practical life comparable in dignity and worth to the crown which rewards such as are swift and strenuous in running the race of knowledge. It is well known to what extremes the licentiousness of speculation on religious

questions has been carried in a neighbouring country, in places like this devoted to the pursuit of knowledge. Through God's blessing, which has connected our Universities so closely with our Church, we have been saved from such extravagances. Nevertheless speculation, except it be duly balanced and kept in check by practical exertion, tends to absorb all our activity and power, and to weaken our other faculties, which must needs rust and dwindle from inaction: and in this respect too, where our treasure is, will our heart be also. Now we have few direct personal calls here to the practical labours of Faith,—few at least which may not easily be evaded by such as are loth to be disturbed in their literary luxury. Thus we can hardly fail to attach an undue importance to whatever proceeds from or acts upon the Understanding, to the truths which it draws forth into the light of day, and to the processes whereby it elicits them. Here therefore above all do we need to be reminded, that the true wisdom of the wise is to lay their choicest offerings, their gold, their frankincense, and their myrrh, at the feet of their Saviour.

This is your duty also, my young friends. It is your duty now: it will continue to be so as long as you live. Be diligent in fulfilling it; and it will become your joy, and your exceeding great reward. To you the world of knowledge is opening: you are looking abroad on its many fair prospects: you are lanching out on one of its wide streams, or threading one of its winding vallies. You are sent hither on purpose that you may explore them, and that you may bear away as much as you can of the riches with which they are fraught. Do so; with all earnestness, with all assiduity, with a confident thirst after truth, with a glowing imagination, and a sunny heart.

Only, while you are exploring the beauties of the earth, let them not charm you into forgetfulness of the heaven that hangs over your heads, of the heaven which alone will enable you to see the beauties even of the earth. You have most of you brought hither a treasure of Faith, which you received from the lips of your mothers: for this, through God's gracious mercy, is still the blessed privilege of England, that one of the first words which her children are taught to utter, is the name of God. Prize and cherish this treasure bestowed on you by her whom you love best upon earth, as the most precious part of your inheritance. Let it not slip from your hearts: you will find great difficulty in replacing it. Be sure that nothing you can gather here will be comparable in value to that treasure, except what helps to increase it: and let this be your stedfast endeavour: let it be your daily aim to grow in Faith. You will be called, among other things, to examine the outward evidences by which the truth of the Gospel is establisht: for to you it especially belongs to give a reason for the Faith that is in you. But remember, my friends, that the being able to give a reason for your Faith is a totally different thing from having Faith; and that, unless the Faith be really in you, your being able to give a reason for it will only be a witness against you for having it not. Do not imagine that your knowledge will produce Faith: scarcely will knowledge strengthen it. Faith, as a practical power, can only be strengthened practically: and this of itself is a conclusive proof that Faith is mainly a practical power. A single act of Faith, a single prayer offered up from the bottom of the heart, a single exertion of self-denial, of selfcontroll, for Christ's sake, a single effort to walk in the footsteps of your Lord and Master, will do

more to strengthen and establish your Faith, than all the learning of all the theologians. While Knowledge wanders to and fro on the face of the earth, and finds no rest for the sole of her foot, Faith will ever return to you with an olive-branch in her mouth: and you may regard this as an infallible sign that the waters of sin are abated: you may bless the herald that brings you a token of forgiveness from the Prince of Peace.

To you, and to all here present, may God in his infinite mercy grant, that we may strive day by day to grow in Faith, and that we may thereby attain to the righteousness of Christ, and receive the sanctification of the Spirit.

SERMON III.

OFFICE AND PROVINCE OF FAITH.

1 John v. 4.
This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

The chief object of the former sermons has been to establish, that Faith, in its scriptural sense, is not a bare intellectual assent to religious truth, but a practical lively apprehension of it, whereby that truth determines and shapes our conduct, and manifests itself therein; that this Faith is essentially a practical principle, a practical power; and that its seat, as was truly laid down by the Fathers of the Reformation, is not in the Understanding alone, but mainly in the Will, — or rather in that central primary principle of our personality, in which the Understanding, the Affections, and the Will coexist in their original unity. When we have attained to a full conviction on this point, so as to keep ever in mind that this is the true nature of Faith, most of the difficulties, which beset the common lifeless notion of it, pass away; a wide prospect opens before us, in which objects, hitherto wrapt in mist, come forth clearly and intelligibly; and we gain a cheering insight into the workings of Faith, and its power. Indeed this is the stirring gladdening reward, which ever waits upon the discovery of truth, that it not only solves the question directly at issue, but throws a bright harmonizing light over the whole region around. For light is by its

very nature diffusive, impatient of all exclusiveness, of all bound and limit, of all check and restraint, and cannot fall on any one object, without spreading over those about it. They who seek in a right spirit, in a spirit of faith and diligence and self-devotion, will not merely find what they seek, but far more. They come ever and anon to one of those centres, whence the rays of truth branch off, and where what may otherwise seem a confused medley and knot of intricacies, settles at once into order and distinctness. If we adopt the common acceptation of Faith, as a mere work of the Understanding, we are entangled at every step in the most bewildering perplexities. At every step our hearts and our consciences lift up their voices in denial of what we are taught to receive as the word of God. We are told that Faith is to justify us; and we feel that such Faith does not justify us. We are told that it is to produce holiness of life; and we feel that it does not exercise the slightest influence on our conduct. We are told that it is to endow us with all power and might; and we feel that it leaves us just as feeble and helpless, just as much the slaves of passion, and the prey of temptation, as ever. We are told that it is the victory which overcometh the world; and we feel that this is the very triumph of the world, to overcome, not the blind, but the seeing; that the captives and victims on whom it prides itself the most, are those who have been taught, who know, whose understandings acknowledge, that the wages of sin is death, and shame, and abject endless misery,—those whose reason declares to them that no lasting peace or joy or comfort is to be found, except in the presence of God;—those who, being in torments, behold Lazarus afar off in Abraham's bosom, yet see at the same time that there is a great

gulf between, over which they cannot pass. We are bid to examine the evidences of Christianity, that so our belief may be rendered more certain. In such a state of mind a treatise on evidences is likelier to produce doubt than conviction. For however valid a title may be, hardly will titledeeds be found, in which captious ingenuity may not detect a flaw: and then, if the validity of the title is to rest upon the deeds, it falls to the ground. At all events such enquiries draw us away from the sacred building which Christ reared, and from the duties which we have to discharge in it, to the quarries whence its materials are taken. In those quarries the idea of the building is nowhere to be found; we never see it as a whole; we learn nothing of the relation and harmony of its parts, nothing of its purpose, of the shelter it affords: instead of this we waste our time in a number of heterogeneous and comparatively petty researches. Or let our conviction become as strong as it is possible for any conviction built upon evidence to be, as strong as our conviction of the Norman conquest, or of the existence of the Roman empire; still we feel that in the matters in which we want help, and in which we are promist that Faith shall strengthen us, such a conviction avails us nothing. We feel that, though such light may shine on the darkness of our nature, yet the darkness comprehendeth it not; that it does not transfigure the darkness into light, but only serves to discover forms of woe, prowling about or cowering beneath it. In fact Faith is not primarily a light of the soul. Though its gaze ought ever to be fixt on the source of all light, it looks to that source rather in the first instance as being at the same time the source of all warmth and of all life. It is the living principle by which the soul drinks in life from the heavenly Fountain of

life: and only as the recipient of the light from above, does it become the light of every one in whom it shines.

When a person is in the state of mind just described, a wise spiritual counsellor will hardly say to him, *The Bible declares that Faith does possess all the virtues, which you pretend you cannot find in it: therefore you must receive the declaration of the Bible as absolute truth, without hesitation or questioning, however your own feelings, however your own consciousness may revolt against it.* This is not the way in which St Paul put down errour, — by a peremptory exertion of authority. He ever tried to win over the Understanding and the Heart, by shewing how the truths he was commissioned to proclaim, inhere in the very first principles of the Christian life, and how the errours he had to reprove were at war with those principles. Nor will any rightminded teacher of the Gospel be content to prolong the discord between the word of God, and that voice which rises from the depths of man's soul. As St Paul at Athens took occasion from the altar dedicated to the Unknown God, to declare that God to the Athenians, whom they were already worshiping without knowing him, so will every teacher, who has the spirit of St Paul, examine and interrogate the voice in man's heart, until he makes it bear witness to the truth of God's word. He will tune the strings, before he begins to play on them. Indeed this is one among the proofs of the antichristian spirit, which has borne such sway in the Romish Church, that it so often issued its dogmas with little else to support them than its anathemas. Yet they who build upon anathemas are as though they built upon barrels of gunpowder, and sooner or later are themselves consumed in the explosion. Whenever a doctrine of the Gospel is promulgated in such a manner, as to

appear plainly at variance with the calmly exercised Reason and Consciousness of mankind, we may feel sure that either there must be something erroneous in its exposition, — from a misunderstanding and misuse of terms,—from the neglect, it may be, of coordinate truths,—from making that absolute, which was meant relatively; — or else that it is brought before a wrong tribunal, and tried by principles and categories which do not apply to it. Not seldom both these things will happen at once: for errours propagate each other; and one false step is mostly followed by a second, though often in an opposite direction. In the present instance, as we have seen, the errour lies in the false conception substituted for the Christian idea of Faith. According to this false and lifeless conception, the mighty workings ascribed to Faith become utterly incomprehensible, repugnant to all experience, and would seem as though they could only be wrought by some kind of magical charm. Yet this is a notion by which numbers beguile themselves, — namely, that an intellectual assent to the articles of the Creed, especially if it be accompanied by an easy placidity of temper, and by decency of outward behaviour, entitles them to all the privileges of the Gospel, and will prove a valid passport into the kingdom of heaven. In many minds, among those who sometimes venture knee-deep into reasoning, this nominal profession of Faith will be undermined by a tacit, half-unconscious unbelief; and then, alarmed by its tottering, they abandon all reflexion on a subject, the difficulties of which seem to become more intricate and obscure, the more they are examined and investigated. Thus, as the extension of a power beyond its proper sphere ever tends to weaken it even within that sphere, the usurpation of the whole

realm of Faith by the Understanding has often led to a suspension of the rightful exercise of the Understanding in all matters relating to Faith; and Thought, when it would fain have been everything, became nothing. On the other hand bolder and more thoroughgoing thinkers, feeling the total inadequateness of an intellectual belief to effect a moral renovation, have too hastily taken offense at what they did not know to be a perversion of the truth, and in their recoil from a fallacious Faith have rashly sought shelter in the hollow lightless and shelterless caverns of infidelity. Every way it is awful to think of the multitude of souls that have been thwarted and checkt in the pursuit of a living Faith, from having the cold phantom of an intellectual Faith thrown across their path in its stead.

Nor will it suffice to reply, that, as these mighty workings are in the New Testament ascribed to Faith, we must therefore believe them implicitly; that we must receive them as a mystery, and not presume that we are to fathom all mysteries with the short reach of our Understandings. Most true indeed it is, that this and every other peculiar doctrine of the Gospel is a mystery, yea, a mystery which was hidden from ages and generations; although in this instance also there were many anticipations of the truth which was to be revealed, much yearning toward it, much groping about for it amid the darkness. Ever since the Fall it had been a mystery, how, by the brooding of what spirit, the invisible world could be enabled to burst through the shell of the visible, — how it could be clothed with such a glory as should not fade away before the garish light of the Senses. But through God's infinite lovingkindness the mysteries, into which so

many prophets and sages had vainly desired to look, have now been made manifest to his saints: and we may still rely with confidence on our Lord's gracious declaration, that to his disciples, to those who believe in him, it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Or has this assurance been revoked? Has the gift of the Spirit been withdrawn from the Church? Are we no longer to walk beneath the light, but darkly, as though the night had overspread us again? Nay, but it is still given to Christ's disciples to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. To those who believe in him, it is given; but to those who do not believe in him, it is not given. It is given to Faith; but to unbelief it is not given. Just such however, we shall find in the course of the argument, is the case with all other mysteries, even with those of natural science. They too are revealed to Faith only: and the Faith in a manner forms the measure of the revelation. They who believe in nothing higher than mere generalizations, will discover nothing higher than mere generalizations. They who believe in laws, will discover laws. They who believe in principles, will have principles revealed to them. And a like reward will be vouchsafed to those who go forth on their enquiries into spiritual mysteries with a dauntless assurance that every word is true which comes from the mouth of the Alltrue, that all truth proceeds from Him alone, that to Him all truth must lead, and that whatever draws us away from Him is a lie, and springs from the Father of lies. We are to seek and search, not with our eyes half closed, as though we were fearful lest we should see too much of truth,—lest we should look beyond God, into a region where God is not. In this respect also, seeing that we have such a Highpriest, who

himself is past into the heavens, we may approach boldly to the temple of Wisdom. For He who has delivered our hearts and souls, has also delivered our minds from the bondage of earth. Therefore let no man say to the waves of Thought, *Thus far shall ye go, and no further.* Let Faith propell them; and they shall roll onward, and ever onward, until they fall down at the foot of the Eternal Throne.

That this is the office and province of Faith,—that it is something far livelier, more powerful, more pervading, than any merely intellectual acknowledgement of truth,—that it is the faculty in man through which the spiritual world exercises its sway over him, and thereby enables him to overcome the world of sin and death,—appears from the wellknown definition or description of Faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The passage is somewhat obscure, owing to the difficulty of expressing the fulness of Hebrew thought in the dialectic language of the Greeks: and our translation merely renders the words of the original, without bringing out the meaning more distinctly. That meaning doubtless must be, that Faith is that power or faculty in man, which gives substance and reality to such things as are not objects of sight, and which fills him with a lively assurance of the things he hopes for. He who believes, in the Scriptural sense, must believe, not merely with his mind, but with his heart, and with his soul, and with his strength. This is the only Faith by which we can live and stand.

It has been urged indeed, in objection to the doctrine concerning the paramount importance of Faith, as proclaimed by the Reformers, that it was a new doctrine, at variance with that system of doctrines which had for ages been held in the Church (T). Now this, in a certain

sense, we know and acknowledge: and therefore do we give God thanks that he was pleased to raise up Luther, to proclaim this great fundamental doctrine, and to gather the soldiers of Christ under the all-conquering banner of Faith. But must not every truth, when it is first drawn out into distinct vision, be new? although, if it be a great and living truth, it will have struck root long before in the heart of ages. Was not the Gospel itself new, when it first came down from heaven? and yet it had been the desire of all nations. Was it not an objection urged against the Copernican system of the universe, that it was new? And may we not discern an interesting analogy between the truths which the two great contemporary Reformers were commissioned to reveal? Man, when following the promptings of his own self-magnifying heart, will make himself the centre of the universe: yet only when he finds a centre out of himself, can he be led to truth. Nay, although both these truths had been hidden for ages and generations, had they not both been written long before, the one on the face of the heavens, the other in the pages of St Paul?

Many of the struggles and conflicts in the history of the Church have arisen from this,—that, while the mind of man in its progressive evolution was necessarily passing through new modes and phases of thought, attempts were made to perpetuate forms of doctrine, which belonged to antecedent epochs, and were at variance with the new one. It was attempted to uphold, not the pure spiritual doctrine of the New Testament, which is everywhere set forth in its essential universality, by being set forth in its living reality, and is thus capable of assimilating with every metempsychosis of human thought, but certain definite forms

of words, in which that doctrine had been promulgated at some particular epoch, and which had not the same expansive assimilative power. It was attempted to force the man into the clothes of the boy, which cramp and fetter him, and which at every motion he rends and bursts. In Christianity, as in everything else that enters into the region of time, there is one side which is variable and progressive, as well as one which is permanent and unchanging. Christ, as God, is the same yesterday, today, and for ever: as man, he grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man. So too in a certain sense has it been with Christianity, even from the very first. Therefore was it of such importance, that the Church should combine the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove; that it should become all things to all men, so that every variety of character, which the diversity of climes or of ages might call forth among mankind, should be hallowed by Faith; that every thought and feeling might stand exalted and glorified in the spiritual firmament of Faith. Thus, when the Gentiles were admitted at the Council of Jerusalem, the Church of Christ grew, not only in stature, but in wisdom. It was made manifest that the partywall of ordinances had been cast down, and that He who was the Hope of Israel, was also the Saviour of all the ends of the earth. Again, when the Council of Nicea declared the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, and when the great Athanasius was called up to proclaim and uphold the true idea of the Trinity, that which had thitherto been the implicit faith of the Church, was brought out into more distinct enunciation. Thus by age after age new constellations have been markt out; and names have been given to stars, which had till then been

nameless. Time after time, fresh irruptions of heresy compelled the Church to define her doctrine more precisely, and to develope certain portions of it more fully. For this is the service which, in the Church, as well as out of it, errour has been made to render to truth. This too is the only way in which a heresy can be beneficially supprest,—by its refutation,—by a thorough satisfying exposition of that portion of the truth, the previous indistinctness of which gave occasion to the heresy, and which its advocates, with the narrowness of view often found in the acute and ingenious, brought forward too prominently and exclusively. Every attempt to stifle heresy in any other way,—be it by persecution, or be it by an authoritative dogma,—betrays a want of Faith,—a want of Faith in truth,—a want of Faith in the harmony by which all truths are bound together,—a want of Faith in the power of the Spirit, by which we are to be led to all truth,—a want of Faith in God's revealed word,—a fear lest that revelation should not be able to demonstrate its accordance with perfect Reason,—a fear lest Wisdom should not be justified by her children. Thus all who insist upon a blind Faith, only shew the feebleness and timidity of their Faith. Nay, at the very moment when they are calling upon mankind to cast down their Understandings before what they assert to be an incomprehensible mystery, there is no little self-exaltation in assuming that their own Understandings are the measure of human capacity, and that what to them is obscure and perplexing, must needs be so for ever to all mankind. To complete the string of contradictions, they who begin with laying down that Faith is a work of the Understanding, proceed to declare that its dealings are with that which is incomprehensible and indemonstrable.

In this sense the doctrine, which became the watchword of the Reformation, concerning the justifying character of Faith, may to a certain extent be termed a new doctrine. It was not the shooting forward of a new star: but a star, which for ages had been standing overhead, and toward which the eyes of many generations had been turned, was more carefully observed; and its polarity was more distinctly recognized. Here too it was out of the darkness that the light was struck. The immediate reason, which led Luther and his brother Reformers to assert this truth with such zeal, and to make it the foremost article in their Confessions, was the prevalence of the opposite errour, the deadly heresy of good works, by which the Church was then overrun. From the very first indeed the truth with regard to this fundamental principle, as it had been declared with such power and clearness by St Paul, had been acknowledged more or less explicitly by the Church. From the very first the Church had felt and known, that, as the grace and truth made manifest in Christ Jesus was the Rock on which it was to stand, so by Faith alone could it stand thereon, by Faith alone could it withstand the assaults of the world. It had felt and known that, if it had built on any other foundation, that, if it had built on the sandy foundation of human works, that foundation would have slipt away from beneath it, and its fall would have been great and terrible as that of the Son of the Morning. From the very first those who embraced Christianity had perceived that its peculiar essence lies, not in the works which it enjoins, but in the truths, the eternal facts and living relations, which it reveals; and still more in the graces which it bestows; that, as a revelation, it could only be made to Faith, and only apprehended by Faith; and

that its heavenly graces were only granted to Faith, and by Faith alone could be received and appropriated. The general scheme of moral observances prescribed by it might on the whole be nearly the same which the Reason and Understanding of man, refined and ripened by the course of ages, had already laid down. That it was so, is proved by the remarkable fact, that the only ethical treatises which have maintained their authority through all ages and nations of Christendom, and which even at this day we know not how to supersede or dispense with, are those by the master of Greek philosophy, and by the master of Roman eloquence. But Christianity breathed the breath of life into that, which before was a body made of the dust of the ground, and which thus became a living soul. The code of duties might be nearly the same: but a spirit from heaven entered into it; and a light from heaven fell upon it. Now so long as Christianity was the antagonist of heathenism, so long as the warfare lasted, that which was especially distinctive of Christianity, would naturally be set in the front of all theological argument: nor could there be a doubt whether Faith was a practical power, when they who bore witness to it rejoiced to do so by martyrdom. Hereby it overcame the world; and this was the crown which the victors strove to gain. On the other hand, after the Church had been set up on the high places of the earth, her attention was drawn more to details of regulation and administration, — to the fruits of Faith, rather than to the power by which those fruits are to be produced: and when she forgot that she was militant, because she had ceast to be so outwardly, when she fancied she was at peace with the world, she at times also forgot that it was still her task to overcome the world; and she

allowed the weapon, wherewith she should have overcome it, to lie in its sheath, brandishing a foil in its stead. From the savage ignorance of the nations that came into her pale, she thought she must deal with them as with children, by the rudiments of ordinances; and thus herself at length fell under the bondage of those rudiments. Good works became the main argument of her preaching. But good works have no life in themselves: they can only spring livingly from Faith. Hence when works are inculcated for their own sake, they will soon degenerate into dead works. The more formal they are, the more easily will they admit of being so inculcated: and then they become a mask, which evil is willing enough to wear. Such were the works with which the Pharisees covered over the sepulcral rottenness of their lives. Such were the works from the soul-crushing yoke of which St Paul delivered the Galatians. Such were the works against which Luther roused the slumbering spirit of Christendom, by reproclaiming the selfsame doctrine, that *man is justified by Faith, without the deeds of the Law* (U). This doctrine had been acknowledged, at least implicitly, by the greatest teachers of Christianity in the interval between St Paul and Luther: only they were not equally alive to the necessity of regenerating the Church by it. They did not see so plainly that, unless the waters are kept ever flowing in freshness and might from the heavenly spring, a crust of weeds is sure to form over them. This Luther saw, with a clearness which nothing could dim, with a certainty which nothing could shake. In this conviction he said to the mystery of iniquity, *Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea;* and it was done. God was pleased again to shew forth how Faith has the power of delivering, as well as of overcoming the world.

Thus the deplorable condition of the Church in Luther's days was the main immediate cause which induced him to give such prominence to the doctrine he was called up to reproclaim, of Justification by Faith (v). But changes and revolutions in the Church, if they are wide-spreading and lasting, are ever coincident with analogous revolutions in the general history of the human mind. In them we see, as in a clock, the progress of Time's great circle: in them we as it were hear the striking of one of its epochal hours. Indeed, as the former revolutions are the most vivid and distinct types of the latter, so are they commonly the primary agents in bringing them to pass. Both light and clouds gather about the hills, before they descend into the valley, and overspread the plain. Now, if we consider the peculiar character which has markt the European mind for the last three centuries, especially in Protestant countries, we may discern how the doctrine of Justification by Faith could not but be the religious expression of that mind. To describe that character by a single word: it has often been observed that what peculiarly distinguishes the modern European mind is its predominant *subjectiveness*, as contrasted with the greater *objectiveness* of former ages. This pervades all the forms of life, all the regions of thought. There has been a far deeper selfconsciousness, which has often approacht to a selfdevouring disease: there has been a more minute self-analysis, a more piercing self-anatomy. Speculation has turned its eyes inward, has become more and more reflective. If we cast a look on the two main provinces of intellect in the great age which followed the Reformation, we find that in Philosophy the grand achievement of that age was the purifying the method of investigation, the gaining a deeper insight into

the laws of thought. Whereafter in another generation Consciousness was asserted to be the ground of all existence; and an attempt was made to expand the proposition, that Thought involves Being, into a complete system of philosophy. Hence by various steps men mounted to the denial of all reality; until at the apex of the pyramid Self took its stand, as its own self-existent world, its own creative god. Meanwhile, as the natural counterpart of this exhausted idealism, the materialist equally denied all moral realities, and made out that the apparitions of all such things are nothing else than a fantasmagoria played off by the magic lantern of self-interest. Thus each way has been enforced the absolute necessity of Faith; without which the Intellect either worships itself, or dashes to atoms on the rocks of the Senses. On the other hand what distinguishes the great poet of the age subsequent to the Reformation, is, as has been repeated thousands of times, his knowledge of human nature. That is to say, he is not contented, like earlier poets, to represent men as acting and suffering, at critical seasons, under the sway of passion: he leads us into their hearts, and shews us the warfare raging there; not merely the calmness or the ruffling of the surface, the rolling and rushing of the waves; he plunges down into the depths, and enables us to discern what is bubbling up and boiling in the abyss. Herein too, as he is the master, so is he the representative of modern poetry, of which the general character has in like manner been reflective, instead of instinctive. Now the effect of such reflexion on religious minds must needs be a deeper consciousness of sin: and this is just what we find in the great Protestant, as compared with the Romanist divines. In the latter, as has often been remarkt, there is mostly

somewhat of a Pelagian tendency; while to the Reformers this was an utter abomination: whence he, among the Fathers of the Church, who was the leading antagonist of Pelagianism, became their chief, almost their only favorite. For the more our inward eye is sharpened, the more exceeding sinful does sin become: the more we analyse our motives, the more impurity do we detect in them. When we merely look at the surface of man's heart, it may often seem to be tranquil, and to glitter in the sunshine: but when we dive into its recesses, we pass away from the region of light, and only find deep below deep, cavern beyond cavern, quicksand beneath quicksand. This must ever be the effect of a thorough conviction of sin. Then it is that *the channels of waters are seen: at Thy rebuke, O Lord, are they seen, at the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils.* And we cry with the Psalmist, *Save me, O God! for the waters are come in unto my soul: I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.* Nay, we burst forth into the still more piteous and awful exclamation, *Who will deliver me from the body of this death?* For we feel that the death is all around us, yea, that it is within us, that our souls are imprisoned helplessly in it, that it has coiled round every nerve, and crept into every vein. In an earlier more superficial state we may deem that there is a value in our services, in our fasts and penances, in our mortification and selfdenial, in retirement from the world and almsgiving. But such things brought no satisfaction to St Paul. They brought no satisfaction to Luther. Hence he pined and wasted away, until the aged monk reminded him of the consolation which he had daily on his lips, though he had never yet tasted its sweetness, the consolation afforded by

that article of the Creed, *I believe in the Forgiveness of Sins* (w). From that moment the assurance of Justification by Faith dawned upon him. He had hitherto been seeking for it, but had been drawn away by selfreliance, by trusting in outward means, in what he himself was to do or suffer. Now he found it as the free gift of Grace: and thus, from that time forth, it became the animating soul of his whole life, inward and outward.

Hence too has the doctrine of Justification by Faith been the cardinal principle of what is sometimes tauntingly termed Modern Theology. If it was not brought forward so prominently in the theology of earlier ages, this was because men thought rather of the outward act, and of its occasional motive, than of its primary ground in a corrupt Will; wherefore they had not the same thorough all-pervading consciousness of sin. Thus they might still cling to the dream of their own merits, and hug it to their hearts. They could maintain that the actions and services of the regenerate might be meritorious: and the delusion reacht such a pitch, that the Church at length admitted the possibility of works of supererogation. Where such an errour could prevail, it is plain that the true doctrine of Justification by Faith must have been lost sight of; though even in the darkest ages of the Church the more spiritualminded, at least in the moments of their highest spiritual life, bore witness to the truth (x). In fact wherever the true idea of Faith is extinct, and it is regarded as a mere operation of the intellect, there must needs be a struggle in men's minds, which will terminate either in indifference, and tacit or open unbelief; or else something else will be superadded to Faith, in order to endow it with a portion of that life, of which it has been stript.

The lifeless notion of Faith, we saw above, will almost infallibly weaken the influence of Faith on the heart and conduct of him who entertains that notion; at least if he brings it distinctly before his own mind. For only so far as his Faith exceeds his own conception of it, can it have any living power: and that conception itself will withhold him from taking the only course whereby his Faith might be enlivened and invigorated. He will not cry to God from the bottom of a yearning heart, *Lord, I believe! help Thou my unbelief.* Instead of this such a person would think over the evidence on which his belief is grounded, and would remind himself again and again how thoroughly convincing it is,—a process just as likely to accomplish his object, as laying bare the roots of a tree would be to promote its growth. Indeed it is a general law of our nature, that, while every power, the legitimate exercise of which is followed by a corresponding action, is strengthened thereby, on the other hand, every power which is checkt in this its appropriate manifestation, is weakened, and gradually deadened. A tree that has been blighted spring after spring, ceases even to bud. A conviction that has failed of producing acts conformable to it, becomes less convincing every time it is appealed to. Experience establishes its nullity. And as this must be the effect of such a notion on individuals, so, as was again proved in the last century, will it spread a chill and numbness through the body of the Church. They who believe only with the Understanding, soon cease almost to believe at all. Even the knowledge, which is only the knowledge of the Understanding, dwindles and sickens and shrivels. This was evinced in the shallowness and feebleness of our theology, which was prone to turn aside from the peculiar truths of the Gospel to general

propositions about the divine nature and attributes, such as belong to what is not very accurately termed Natural Religion. For these propositions, being inferences arrived at by reasoning, might thus be matters of a merely speculative Faith: nor does this Natural Religion call for more, inasmuch as it does not place man in any immediate personal relation to God. Whereas to Christ, the incarnate God, our relations are wholly personal. He is not a notional abstraction, not an idea of the mind, enthroned in a logical vacuum. We are bound to Him by all our deepest, strongest, most personal feelings, — by our personal consciousness of sin, by our personal need of redemption, by gratitude for personal forgiveness, by love on account of love shewn directly, personally to ourselves. Thus, while the God of this Natural Religion is an object of mere belief, Christ is an object of Faith: and where Faith shrinks up into belief, Christ will almost be lost sight of. To mere speculation, when disjoined from a living personal practical Faith, He is still, as He ever has been, *foolishness*.

Another result from the same lifeless notion of Faith was the irreligious spirit which pervaded the worldly, or, as it may truly be called, the profane literature of the last century, as compared with that of earlier ages; its total alienation from Christianity, its forgetfulness of God, its habit of looking at the world solely in reference to man, without discerning any traces of a divine order and government. For a notional belief may be put aside, when we please. Indeed it passes away of itself, when we turn our thoughts in another direction: nor does it come forward, unless we fix our mind specifically upon it. Whereas a living Faith cannot but manifest itself. It cannot lie still in the heart, but circulates through our whole being, animating, elevating, hallowing, all that we say and do.

In the outward condition of our Church, the inevitable consequence of this notional theology was, that it lost its hold upon the poor; whose intellects are seldom sharpsighted enough to perceive the evidence of demonstration; and who, not finding even the semblance of satisfaction elsewhere, feel a more pressing need of something that will touch the heart and stir the conscience. We in this place may dream we are fed, when we get nothing but the husks of knowledge: the poor must have the living Gospel; or they starve. Hence the rapid growth of dissent in all parts of the land: for to the famishing the very coarsest food is more acceptable than a picture of the choicest dainties, or than empty dishes, albeit of silver and gold. And when it pleased God to call up men of a living Faith within the bosom of the Church, and to send them forth for the edifying of his people, the holders of a notional belief regarded them as enthusiasts and fanatics, and pointed the finger of scorn at them, and almost cast them out from the communion of Christian fellowship. At times indeed there may doubtless have been extravagances of doctrine,—there may often have been extravagances of manner and conduct, — whereby some of these men gave needless offense: for Zeal does not always measure and count her steps, or walk hand in hand with Caution. But too often, it is to be feared, what was most offensive in them, was the witness they bore in behalf of a living, as opposed to a notional Faith. Else their extravagances might easily have been excused. Besides no small part of these very extravagances was owing to the opposition they encountered. For this is the curse of all hostility, that it is almost sure to put both parties in the wrong. Even those who previously occupied an impregnable position of right, quit it for the

sake of snatching a temporary advantage, or of inflicting a blow on the enemy. Of late years, through God's blessing, there has been a considerable approximation between the opposite parties in our Church. We have learnt to feel that we have a common cause, that we are all servants of the same Master. In some degree this may be owing to our having a common enemy to contend against, and to the restless tenacity with which we have been attackt. But in part it is assuredly owing to the growth and diffusion of a stronger living Faith. For a living Faith seeks unity, which implies diversity, and manifests itself therein: whereas a notional Faith imposes and exacts uniformity, without which it has no ground to stand on. God grant that this principle of union may still continue increasing in strength amongst us, and that it may go on producing its perfect work, the unity of the body of Christ; wherein all the gifts of all its members shall find their appropriate office! And if we want a common enemy to combat, we have one, a mighty one, a terrible one, meeting us at every step, lying in wait for us at every moment, besieging our houses, prowling about our chambers, riding in triumph through our streets, thickening like a pestilence where multitudes swarm together, and yet rising like the malaria out of lonely and desolate places, and finding its way into the student's solitary cell, — even Sin, in all its deadly manifestations both within and without us. To fight against this enemy will require all our united forces: and the only victory whereby he can be overcome is the victory of Faith.

Thus wide and calamitous experience has shewn, time after time, how feeble a thing a notional Faith is, and how by it the great works, which in the Scriptures are ascribed

to Faith, could never have been wrought. On the other hand, when we have gained hold of the conviction that Faith is a practical principle, and that its chief seat is in the Will, we begin to perceive how it may well be fitted for exercising such power, both inwardly, on a man's own nature and conduct, and outwardly, on the world he has to act upon; how through Faith he may overcome himself, and may thus be enabled to overcome the world. For the Will is the soverain, to whom it belongs to rule and sway our actions. It takes counsel of the Understanding, — as a master however, not as a servant, — as a king seeking counsel from his ministers, but alone able to give that counsel the force of law. And this is the act of Faith, — the royal assent of the Will to the truths laid before it by the Understanding. The Will too is the seat at once of our weakness, and of our strength. When the Will is weak, the whole character is weak: when the Will is strong, so is the whole character. Even within the range of our own observation, we must have found that the persons who by a tacitly acknowledged right exercise influence and authority, are those who have a strong determinate Will: and whithersoever we look in history, we shall see this conclusion confirmed; at least if we bear in mind that calmness is not weakness, nor violence strength. Now the strength of the Will lies in Faith, in a resolute persevering adherence to a purpose, which, being something to be done, something that as yet lies far off, must be an object of Faith: whereas the weakness of the Will, its fickleness, its proneness to be diverted and to turn aside from its course, spring from the want of Faith, from the incapacity of cleaving stedfastly to an object, which affords no gratification to our lower faculties and appetites. It is

true, the strength of the Will in a character is far from a test of its moral purity and worth. Herein the children of darkness are too often wiser than the children of light. Although the full power and dignity of the Will can never be manifested, except when it is animated by Faith, and when that Faith is directed toward a right object, the lower part of our nature has so entirely supplanted the higher, that we are far readier to believe in the reality of worldly objects, even of such as are remote in time and space, and to act under the steady sway of that belief. For this is the deadly disease, the great crack and chasm in our being, the rupture by which the Will has been severed from the Understanding. Hence it is that we do that which we allow not: hence that which we would, according to the law of our Reason, according to the voice of our Conscience, we do not. For though our Reason and Conscience delight after a measure in the law of God, our Will is brought into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members. Our intellectual faculties, however they may have degenerated, through the servile taskwork in which they have been employed, — however they may have become gross and sluggish from the atmosphere they have been wont to breathe, — are still able, when we employ them diligently, and with singleness of aim, to discern many glorious glimpses of truth. Our Affections, when objects worthy of love are presented to them, are still capable of admiring and loving the beauty of goodness; except when, by a long drudgery in the toils of sin, their native delicacy and freshness has been worn away: and then it will sometimes happen, that their appetites can no longer be stimulated, their cravings no longer glutted, save by crime. So that the origin of all that is weakest and worst both in our

Affections and in our Understanding is the frailty and corruption of the Will. When the Reason is directed toward lofty truths, it rushes to them with a magnetic sympathy: when the Affections are fixt upon that which is really and purely beautiful, then alone is there healthiness, freshness, tranquillity, contentment in their delight. Or is it not so, my friends? Yes, surely you must often have felt this. And yet, — this too you must have felt, — so perverse is our Will, we degrade our Understanding, we debase and poison our Affections, by employing them in the service of sin. Instead of sending out the mind into the regions of heavenly truth, where it would come forth like a bridegroom from his chamber, and rejoice as a giant to run its course, we make it the purveyor of our vanity, or of our covetousness, or of our ambition: and this arises from our want of Faith,—because we will not believe our Understandings, because we will not believe our Hearts, when they tell us what are the noblest, most precious objects of human endeavour. Thus the Will, through its want of Faith, is wholly corrupt, wholly estranged from God, wholly given up to wilfulness and self-idolatry, stedfast in nothing except in walking in the ways of the children of disobedience. Even in our fallen estate, we may still reason out many things concerning God: we cannot but feel some glow of admiration and thankfulness, when we meditate on the infinite glories of His wisdom and goodness: but to serve Him, to obey Him, to bow our Wills to His, to follow His Will instead of our own, — this no child of man ever did, ever could do, except through that aid of the Holy Spirit, which is vouchsafed to such as believe. This therefore is the disease in our nature, which especially needs to be healed: and for this disease Faith is the

appropriate remedy; — Faith, whereby we give ear to the calmest voice of our Reason, and follow the purest promptings of our Affections, thus strengthening both the former and the latter; Faith, whereby our hearts and minds are lifted up from earthly things to heavenly, and are fixt thereon,— whereby we receive God into our hearts, — whereby we trust in Him, instead of trusting in ourselves, — whereby, when sinking under the consciousness of our own blindness and helplessness, the effect of our habitual sins, we take God's word for our guide, God's law for our rule, God's strength for our trust, God's mercy and grace for the sole ground of peace and comfort and hope. Thus, whereas at the Fall we were driven out from the presence of God in consequence of our unbelief, by Faith we are restored to His presence, and live continually as in His sight, beholding His eye watching over us and guiding us, and His hand ever stretcht out to support us.

The common definition of Faith, which was cited at the opening of this discussion, and which describes it as the assent of the mind to certain truths, beyond the reach of Reason, delivered by testimony supported by the evidence of miracles (y), is erroneous, we have seen, so far as relates to the act, which it represents as the constituent of Faith. For Faith, in its Scriptural sense, is not merely the assent of the Mind or Understanding to divine truth, but that of the Heart and of the Will, their assent, and their corresponding energy: and much perplexity might be avoided, many mischievous delusions might be checkt, if we were careful, in all the uses of the word *Faith*, to keep its moral element in sight; appropriating the word *Belief* to the merely intellectual act. Nor is that definition less mistaken with regard to the objects which it assigns to Faith.

There is no such distinction, as that here implied, between the provinces of Faith and Reason, no such contrast or opposition between the two principles. They may both have the selfsame objects, may both rule side by side over the same domain. The difference lies, not in the truths which are their objects, but in the manner in which those truths are received and apprehended. This is sufficiently proved by the description of Faith already cited from the Epistle to the Hebrews. We there see that the true antithesis is not between Faith and Reason, but between Faith and Sight, or more generally between Faith and Sense. The objects of Faith are not the things which lie beyond the reach of Reason, but the things which lie beyond the reach of Sight, the things which are unseen, the things which as yet are objects of Hope, and which therefore must be remote from the Senses. Nor is the office of Faith to deliver man from the bondage of Reason, but from the bondage of the Senses, by which his Reason has been deposed and enthralled, and hereby to enable him to become Reason's willing, dutiful, active servant. In fact the truths which are the objects of Faith, are in the main the very same which are the objects of Reason: only, while Reason is content to look at them from afar, or, it may be, handles them and turns them about, or analyses and recompounds them, but after all leaves them lying in a powerless notional abstraction, Faith on the other hand lays hold on them, and brings them home to the heart, endowing them with a living reality, and nurtures itself by feeding on them, and leans on them as on a staff to walk with, yea, fastens them on to the soul as wings wherewith it may fly. Thus Faith surpasses Reason in power and vitality: it also anticipates Reason by centuries, sometimes by millenniums. It darts

at once with the speed of sight to those truths, which Reason can only attain to slowly, step by step, often faltering, often slumbering, often wandering by the way. Nay, all the truths which are rightly the objects of Faith, have always, we may be sure, been true in the eye of perfect Reason. Else how could they be true at all? or what is Truth, except the very heaven of heavens, in which God dwells, which has girt him round from the beginning, ever flowing in eternal purity from the breath of His Word? And what are the truths which human Reason discerns, except so many islands of this everlasting firmament, gleaming in upon us through the clouds with which our sinful nature has encompast us? Man's carnal Understanding indeed will assert that the clouds are the real firmament, and that the patches of blue are merely cracks in the clouds, through which we look into nonentity. But Faith knows that the firmament spreads over all, above and behind the clouds, and that every truth is a part of it: and Reason also, under the guidance of Faith, will learn to perceive this. Many truths, which at first appeared to be inscrutable mysteries, and which were even declared to be contrary to Reason by such as knew not that Reason has any higher office than that of systematizing the generalizations from the objects of the senses, have in course of time been discerned to be in perfect harmony with the laws of the spiritual universe, in proportion as Reason has been enlightened to behold those laws by the revelations and inspirations of Faith. And it would almost imply a cowardly distrust, to doubt that such discoveries will hereafter be carried further and further, — that more and more of the mighty firmament will be unveiled, according as the purificatory power of the Sun of Righteousness draws away

the vapours whereby we are prevented from beholding it, — and that a deeper and deeper insight will gradually be gained into the infinite wisdom of God, as manifested not only in the works of creation, but above all in the work of redemption; until all our faculties of heart and mind unite in perceiving and confessing that all the works of the Lord are verity and judgement, and that all His commandments are true. Not however that even then Reason will in the slightest degree supersede Faith, or interfere with it, or lessen its power or its importance. Rather will it enlarge the empire of Faith, adding new provinces to its dominion, enriching it with new grounds of hope and trust, with new causes and objects of adoration; as it ever has done, in the advances of Science, when Wisdom has gone hand in hand with Knowledge. Faith will still be no less indispensable than ever, to give life and substance to the truths discerned by the Reason. For far the largest part of mankind, Faith, it would seem, must ever be, as it always has been, the only faculty whereby divine truth can be at all apprehended: and even the knowledge of the most learned, the speculations of the most subtile and profound, unless there be a living principle of Faith in the heart, will only shine as on a corpse, hastening its decay and dissolution.

This has often been manifested in the history of the world. When Faith dies away, the heart of a nation rots; and then, though its intellect may be acute and brilliant, it is the sharpness of a weapon of death, and the brightness of a devouring fire. Philosophy degenerates into sophistry, ethics into casuistry; the Understanding toils in the service of Mammon and Belial; the Imagination, instead of purifying and elevating, stimulates and pampers the Senses. All the faculties with which man was endowed in order

that he might turn this world into the temple and garden of God, busy themselves in building and decking out an earthly Pandemonium. Your own memories will remind you of divers instances of this: above all, will your thoughts naturally recur to the state of literature and society in France during the last century; when a cry, great and grievous as that from the cities of the plain, went up before God; and when again it was shewn forth that the sins of nations, as well as of individuals, are their own scourge, of all ministers of vengeance the most terrible. Now *these things* also, as the apostle says, *happened to them for examples, and are written for our admonition.* They admonish us that the ground of this desolation, the origin of all these abominations, was the turning away of the heart and mind of the nation from God. Whereupon the restless intellect bred a herd of false gods, drawing forth idol after idol from the bowels of Sin, and setting up Gluttony, and Lust, and Covetousness, and Ambition, and Vanity, on every hearth, and in every heart, as the deities that it behoved man to bow down to and serve. To cater for these gods, ships sailed round the globe: armies marcht into the field at their beck: and this was the least criminal of the blood that was shed at their altars. Among the rites of this worship many had a far deeper taint of hell. Poverty was trampled upon; innocence was crusht; hearts were broken, or more fatally blasted; every virtue was denied and derided. It is so difficult for any one to form a right judgement on his own age and country, — a difficulty springing from many of the causes which render selfknowledge so impossible, with others superadded to them, — that I will not presume to pronounce how far any like symptoms may be discernible in the present condition of

England. Thus much however is plain, that, if one man, through an evil-boding fancy, and from want of a right sympathy with the present order of things, may imagine dangers where they do not exist, motives, at least equally strong, may blind others to them where they do exist. And it should be borne in mind, that nations also, when they have begun to sink, have scarcely any power to check their descent; and that, unless some happy shock drives them upward, they commonly continue to fall with an ever increasing velocity. Most needful therefore is it that we should hold fast to that Faith, which alone can keep us from falling, inasmuch as through it we hold fast to Him who alone is able to do so. Yea, this is the more needful, in proportion as we have the greater weight to support, as there are mightier powers dragging us downward, powers only to be overcome by that which overcometh all things. And what a ghastly crash would it be, sounding to the uttermost shore of the universe, if England, with her thousand crowns of glory, and with the Church of God in her heart, were to fall down into hell! Let us not boast that our morality is purer than that of other nations, and that therefore we are safe. There is no stability for morality, except in Faith. The stern severity of the old Romans did not withhold their degenerate descendants, when the ancient Faith had been supplanted by Epicurean materialism and utilitarianism, from plunging into the lowest abyss of debauchery.

A right understanding on the distinction between Faith and Reason, with the accompanying conviction that the separation and opposition usually establisht between them are utterly groundless, is not merely of importance as a speculative truth, but also because no errour on any

great question bearing upon the moral nature of man has ever become dominant in the schools, without spreading abroad and producing much practical mischief. This twofold errour, — that Faith is an operation of the Understanding, and that its sole dealings are with matters which transcend the range of the Understanding, — has been a main cause in propagating that disastrous notion, which has been so prevalent during the last century and a half, that Religion has no concern with the affairs of ordinary life, — that it is a garb of mind which a good man will wear on a Sunday, but which every man of the world, every man of sense, — how the very names on which they pride themselves condemn them! — will cast aside during the rest of the week, — that it is the peculiar province of the clergy, into which the laity have no business to intrude, — that its rightful seat is in the church, but that it would be out of place in the market or the senate. In the Romish Church, one might have thought, these worldly tendencies, so natural to man, would have been kept in check by those ordinances of ancient wisdom, which had carefully provided that every important act of our human life should be consecrated by the express sanction of religion. But this beneficent purpose was counteracted by that narrowminded and most uncatholic jealousy, which made the clergy desirous to maintain a monopoly of religious knowledge: whereby, according to a righteous judgement, the monopolizers themselves were the sufferers, and, instead of Christianizing the world, became themselves secularized. With us, on the other hand, whatever tends to render us the children of this world has an ally of formidable power in our intense commercial and manufacturing energy; which not only furnishes the Prince of this

world with endless stores of baits and snares to catch souls with; but which fosters and stimulates our lower intellectual faculties, — faculties conversant with objects below man, and thus reminding us of our superiority, — while it rather checks and stunts the higher faculties, designed to soar toward objects above man, and thereby awakening a consciousness of our inferiority; which withdraws us from that immediate intercourse with nature, where at each step we see marks of a power independent of man, and immeasurably surpassing his loftiest conceptions; and which places us where everything is stampt with the impress of man's intellect, and attests his triumphs. In this manner the Prince of this world contrives, even in a Christian country, to engross all but the whole of men's time and thoughts; being aided and abetted in so doing by that philosophy which excludes Faith from his domain. He is willing to allow, if you insist upon it, that there is a God far away, in some undiscovered corner of the universe. But he will not allow that God can be present amongst us. He will not allow that the kingdom of heaven can have begun already. *No!* he says: *possibly it may come by and by, nobody knows when: but Here and Now is the kingdom of earth: of that I am the soverain: therefore fall down and worship me.*

Thus the separation of Faith from Reason undermines the power of Faith, casts it out from its boundless empire, shuts it up in a remote island, and leaves it to perish there; as it needs must when it is not fed by the daily offerings of the heart. Whereas the rightful sphere of Faith is the whole invisible universe, as the ground and life and substance of the visible. In all the works of the creation, in the whole order and course of the world, it sees and

feels and acknowledges the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and godhead. It feels that God compasseth its path, and its lying down, and spieth out all its ways. Hereby it gives substance to the things that are unseen. It beholds them and gazes upon them as the true living realities; while the things that are seen become the mere perishable garment in which God is pleased to clothe His laws, the signs and tokens of His creative Will. And when Faith performs its still higher office, of piercing through the dark vapours of sin and death, until it discerns the Cross rising out of them in heavenly peace,—when falling down at the foot of that Cross it lays hold on God's salvation and redemption, — it becomes the assurance and conviction of the things that we hope for.

May such Faith be granted to us! May we ever acknowledge with our minds, and feel in our hearts, that God is the only eternal reality, and that all things else are only real, so far as they are in Him! Then, when the pulse of Time has ceast to beat, we shall see Him in whom we have believed: we shall see that Sin is swallowed up in death, and that whatever is of God liveth for ever.

SERMON IV.

POWER OF FAITH IN MAN'S NATURAL LIFE.

1 John v. 4.
This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

After the discussion concerning the nature of Faith into which we have entered in the former sermons, there will be little difficulty in answering the second question proposed at the outset of our argument, — namely, whether Faith is a totally new principle, peculiar to Christianity, altogether alien from every principle by which mankind had previously been actuated; or whether, like love and obedience, and most of the virtues enjoined in the Gospel, it be not rather the perfection and consummation of what had already existed, the conversion of it to its right object, and the consequent enlargement of its power and range. At first thought indeed it would seem as if there could hardly be a doubt upon this point. As Christianity appeals to our Faith, it would seem that there must needs be something in man, whereto that appeal is addrest; that there must be something in him like Faith, imperfectly developt, it may be, latent or dormant, waiting for the manifestation of Him in whom we are to believe. As *he who believeth and is baptized shall be saved*, and *he who believeth not shall be condemned*, it would seem as if there must be a

certain power of believing, for the exercise whereof man, even in his natural unbaptized state, is responsible; for the misuse of which he may righteously be condemned. It would seem as if Faith also must be a gift given to him who hath; while from him who hath not, it is taken away. And may we not draw a like conclusion from the analogy of the miracles which our Saviour wrought to heal men's bodily infirmities? Whithersoever he came, the blind saw, the lame walkt, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard: that is, each organ and member was restored to its appropriate use, was so strengthened that it was enabled to perform the task it was originally designed for. He did not give the lame a crutch to walk with: he did not give them a wooden leg. That would have been a sorry miracle, would have proved his own weakness, and not remedied theirs. Nor did he give them wings to fly with. That would have been the work of a magician, not of a Saviour. The magician displays his own power and craftiness in making that which is not. The Saviour manifests incomparably higher power and wisdom in the far more glorious and godlike work of saving and perfecting that which is. Such has been the counsel of God's providence from the beginning. When man fell, God did not sweep him away at once into the abyss of death, and create a new race of beings in his stead. He vouchsafed to shew forth his patience and longsuffering, by bearing with man, by striving with him for his own good, in order to save him, if so be he would let himself be saved. The whole course of the destinies of the world has been ordained for this very end, to draw forth and foster and train up all the germs of good, which were originally planted in man's nature, and to deliver him from the curse of sin, whereby those germs had

been blasted and stifled. Above all was this the purpose for which the Son of God became incarnate, coming, as has been observed already, not to destroy man's nature, but to fulfill it. As he came not to destroy or overthrow anything that God had said, whether in the Law, or by the mouth of the prophets, but to fulfill it;—as he fulfilled the moral Law, in his own person, by every deed and word of his holy life;— as he fulfilled the ceremonial Law, by *offering one sacrifice for sins*, whereby *he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified* (Hebr. x. 12, 14);— as he fulfilled the Law moreover, by stripping off, or rather unfolding, the husk of the letter, and manifesting it in its fulness and glory as the spiritual Law of Love;— as he fulfilled the Law, by shewing mankind, at once by his word and by his example, how it was to be and might be fulfilled, and by sending his Spirit from heaven to enable them to fulfill it;— as in like manner he fulfilled all that the prophets had spoken, being himself the beginning and the end of all prophecy, fulfilling it in himself, and laying the foundation for its fulfilment in his Church;— so too he came not to destroy anything that God had made, but to fulfill it, to fulfill God's purpose in everything. Therefore did he become man, perfect man, man in everything, sin alone excepted, the second Adam, in whom the idea of humanity was fulfilled. He fulfilled man's nature in himself, being himself everything that man ought to have been, according to God's primordial idea and purpose: and all his precepts, all his exhortations, all his gifts, all the graces that he bestows by his Spirit, lead and draw and carry on mankind to the same fulfilment of God's idea and purpose. Their end is to transfigure human nature from within, not to transform it from without. There is ever something in human nature

that corresponds to them, however faintly and imperfectly, an echo that answers to them, a shadow or likeness, which we can discern, when we see what it resembles and shadows forth. A blasted tree is still a tree: a cankered flower is still a flower: the body of a man, however maimed or crippled or withered by disease, is still the body of a man: and if it is to be healed, the cure can only be wrought by a strengthening of the living principle within it, and by a weakening of the disease; so that the healthy power becomes the stronger of the two, and subdues the other. Accordingly our Saviour, in the execution of his gracious purpose to deliver man from the thraldom and disease of the world, did not call upon us to exercise a faculty, which was not in us already. Had he done so, his call must have been utterly vain: we should have had no ear to listen to it, no voice wherewith to reply to it. He appealed to that principle, which, weak as it was in its higher manifestations, and kept under, and almost crusht by the pressure of the world, was still, under one form or other, the ground of whatever is great and good in man, even when regarded merely as a creature of this world, — to that which is the nourishing atmosphere of his intellectual, his moral, and his social, as well as of his spiritual life. He appealed to our Faith.

If Christian Faith has often been represented as a totally new quality, a gift of the Spirit, to which there is nothing at all analogous in the unregenerate man, this has arisen in great measure from the notion that Faith is mere belief. For such Faith being notoriously powerless, as every conscience must often have avoucht, they who felt the inadequateness of such Faith for the office assigned to it in the Christian scheme of salvation, might naturally infer that

the Faith, which is to be the living root of the Christian life, must be something wholly and essentially different from any form of belief discoverable in the natural man. And so in truth it is. Whereas, if the business of Faith be, in all men equally, to lift up the Heart and the Will, as well as the Understanding, from things seen to things unseen, and to draw us away from the impulses of the present moment to the objects of hope held out by the future, — to supply us with higher principles and motives and aims of action, than those with which the senses pamper and drug us, — then assuredly may the whole of man's life, so far as he is man, so far as he is a being raised above the beasts of the field, be called a school and exercise and discipline of Faith.

It is true, that, with reference to the affairs of this world, as has been remarkt already, we are not wont to hear much of Faith, to attach much importance to it as a principle of our own conduct, or to find much importance attacht to it by others. And this is one of the reasons why in common opinion such a broad line of demarcation is drawn between religion and the goings on of our everyday life; as though the only claim of religion were to cut off and set apart a certain portion of our time for its own special ends, instead of pervading and hallowing the whole. Hence we forget that the purpose of offering the first-fruits was that the whole lump might also be holy: we think that, if we offer the firstfruits, we have done quite enough: and then, when the firstfruits have no longer anything more than a formal value, our cupidity, finding an ally in that sound feeling which revolts from whatever is unreal and hollow, substitutes the refuse in their stead; as has been often exemplified in divers ways on the decay of

religious feeling in every country, and not least in our own. This however is in fact only another instance of acts which from their perpetual ceaseless iteration escape our notice. When we read the Bible, we are taught that *the just live by Faith*. But when we think about our condition in this world, about our manifold ties and dealings with each other, we seldom call to mind that, as members of a state, as members of a family, as neighbours living in social intercourse and mutual interdependence, — nay, that as men, as beings framed with thoughts and wishes which pierce beyond the outward shell of the objects set before us by the senses, which dive and soar beyond the little drop of time wherein we are immerst, — as creatures who do not feed, like the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, on what the earth and waters cast up, but who have to prepare and provide our food long beforehand, — we do not call to mind that, as beings who look before and after, who look above and within, as beings who think and read and know and love, as beings who dwell in houses and eat bread, it is only through Faith that we can do all these things, — it is only through Faith that we can live at all. Everything that we do from any motive whatsoever, beyond the blind impulses of the senses, and the brutish lusts of the moment, — everything that we do in any way for the sake of others, or with a view to the future, though it be no further than the morrow, must needs be in some measure an act of Faith. It could not be done, unless there were a living principle within us, whereby the invisible world is enabled to struggle and heave against the superincumbent weight of the visible, and for moments at least to shake it off and overpower it; unless there were a secret sympathy between our spirits

and the spiritual essences of all things that live and move and are, by the strength of which they burst through the partywalls between them, and meet. Thus our whole lives, — thus the life of every being who lives any higher life than that of the beasts of the field, — of every being who projects his thoughts, consciously, and by the act of his own will, beyond the present moment, — is made up, whether we are aware of it or no, of numberless ever-recurring petty acts of Faith. This, which in one respect is the infirmity, in another is the chief dignity, and, so long as the invisible things are better than the visible, the noblest privilege of our nature, that, as the great Apostle says, *we walk by Faith, not by sight.*

To take one of the simplest daily examples: when we lie down on our beds at night, we lie down in Faith. We believe and trust that the dew of sleep will fall on our heavy eyes, and will bathe our weary limbs, and will refresh them and brace them anew. We believe and trust that we shall sleep in safety. We believe and trust that after a while the light will come forth again, and dispell the darkness, and will draw up the curtains of our eyelids, and will rouse us out of our forgetfulness, and will restore us to consciousness, and to the mastery over ourselves. It may be objected indeed, that brute animals also lie down to sleep, that birds fly home to their nests, and that they do this without Faith. I have purposely referred you in the first instance to an act, which, viewed outwardly, is common to us with brute animals; because this very act illustrates the difference between human beings, — who are made to live by Faith, and who therefore, even when complying with the irresistible impulses of their animal nature, exercise more or less of foresight and preparation, more or

less of a conscious purpose, — and brute animals, that in this as in other respects obey a blind unconscious instinct. If there be any creatures below man, which provide for the future, with a conscious purpose of doing so, as at first sight one might be inclined to suppose of certain insects, they would exhibit the first germs at once of intelligence and of Faith. But it is more probable that what we see in them is here, as in so many other cases among the works of Nature, the type and foreshadowing of that which was to be fulfilled and perfected in man.

Again, when we rise in the morning, and betake ourselves to our daily task, we rise and set to our task in Faith. We believe and trust that the light will abide its wonted time in the sky, and that we may, each according to his station, *go forth to our work and to our labour until the evening.* And whatsoever that work may be, every step we take in it must rest on the ground of Faith. We must believe that the end we have in view must be something desirable, something worth striving after, and that will reward us for the toil it may cost. We must believe too that the road we take will lead to it, that the means we make use of are fitted for promoting it: and this involves a Faith in the constant never-failing succession of cause and effect, — a Faith that what has been will still be, — that all the changeful appearances of outward things are governed by certain laws, and that these laws, in spite of the changeableness of their manifestations, are fixt and lasting. Without such a Faith man could never act at all. For all action implies a purpose in the agent, an end to be effected, and means whereby it is to be effected: and whatever we may do, we do with the conviction that such and such means will bring about such and such ends.

Indeed this Faith is so inwrought into our minds, as to be an inseparable part of them. It has been termed a primary elemental part of our intellectual constitution, by philosophers who wisht to raise a mound against the assaults of a pulverizing scepticism; and who perhaps might have gained wider views of truth, had they paid more regard to the importance of Faith, as a pervading essential principle of our whole humanity, and to its indispensableness as the only stable groundwork of whatever is right and true in feeling and knowledge and conduct.

Here we may plainly see, what a vast interval there is between that knowledge of the laws of Nature, of their principles, connexion, and operation, toward which Science is gradually ascending, and that simple confident unquestioning Faith in the laws of Nature, which is necessary to the very subsistence of man as man. Think for a moment how much Faith is implied in the labours of the husbandman. How many causes must work together, in order that his desire may be accomplisht! He must have an undoubting assurance that, according to the covenant made with Noah, *seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.* In this assurance he plies his daily task, "plodding on cheerfully" through many difficulties and discouragements, confident that, after moons have waxt and waned, the seed he sows will spring up, and will fill the golden ear, and be reapt in the joyful harvest, and be stored in the foodful garner, and that men and women and children will receive the sustenance of their life from it. Such power has a living practical Faith in the laws of Nature. Its effect, even in this one mode of its manifestation has been that the chief part of the earth has been constrained to bring

forth food for the use of man, and that millions upon millions of human beings have been fed for hundreds of generations. And surely our Faith in the certainty and stability of the laws of the spiritual world ought to be no less strong,—nay, far stronger. For while Nature and her laws may be changed as a vesture, — being nothing more than the vesture wherein God, in this nook of time and space, is pleased to array his Will, — the laws of the spiritual world can never change or fail. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but not one jot or tittle of them. On them therefore we should rely, never doubting that, when we go forth to sow our seed of whatsoever kind in God's spiritual field, He will bless our labours with his increase, and in his own good time will make the seed spring up, and will ripen it for his heavenly harvest.

If we follow out the foregoing train of thought, applying it to the various pursuits and employments of mankind, we shall perceive, even looking at ourselves merely as creatures of this world, that, so far as we are indeed men, and live as men, like beings endowed with foresight and forethought, God has so framed our nature, and ordered our condition, that, whereas all our spiritual strength must grow from the root of Faith, and all our everlasting hopes must rest on the foundation of Faith, Faith, under one form or other, has likewise been made the groundwork of all that is distinctively human in man, of all his activity, of all his wellbeing and happiness even in this life. As far as we are acquainted with the various orders of created beings, there are two ways of living, — by Sense, and by Faith. The brute animals, that live altogether in the present, and for the present, live almost solely by Sense, under the sway of a blind irresistible

instinct. Man, whose present fleeting state is designed to be merely a first step, as it were, and a preparation for a higher enduring future, is meant to live by Faith. In proportion as he fulfills his nature and purpose as man, in the same proportion must he live by Faith. When he lives by Sense, he forfeits and strips himself of his humanity, and degrades himself to the level of the beasts of the field. As we read of Nebuchadnezzar, that, because he did not acknowledge *that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men*, he was therefore *driven out from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles feathers, and his nails like birds claws;* in like manner we too, if we were not endowed with a Faith in the order and laws according to which God governs all things upon earth, should wander forth from the fertile fields of civil life into the waste wilderness of howling wants and ravening lusts, and should have to eat grass like oxen; and our bodies too would be wet with the dews of heaven, until our hairs grew like eagles feathers, and our nails like birds claws. Knowledge, thought, speech, all the bonds and ties of social life, would drop off from us. The bright and rich fabric of cultivation, which man has raised over the earth, would be swept away, or rather would never have existed. Our birthplace would be in the loose sand of the desert, our grave in the wild beast's den.

For this, if we compare the outward condition of mankind with that of other animals, must needs strike us at first sight as the pervading difference between them,—that, while other creatures in the main take the gifts of Nature as she gives them, man new-moulds and shapes and mixes

up and alters and modifies all things. He does not feed, like other animals, on that which the earth brings forth of its own accord. He does not lie down under the open sky, or take shelter in the natural cavern. He changes the face of the earth by plowing and sowing, by building houses and gathering into cities. He invents arts and manufactures. He works in iron and in stone, in cotton and in silk. He devises remedies against sickness, and crosses the great deep in ships. Employments of this sort engage nearly the whole activity of far the largest part of mankind: and none of them can be carried on without more or less of Faith. So is it with every other work whereby man proves that he has not been gifted in vain with eyes set in the front of his head, in order that he may look before him. Whoever looks forward, instead of chaining his eyes down to the ground, — whoever casts his thoughts onward beyond the present moment, — whoever does what he does, not for its own sake, but for the sake of some end which is to accrue from it by and by, — must do so by virtue of his Faith, — believing and trusting that the means he makes use of will lead to that end, and that the end itself is worth seeking, though at the cost of labour and trouble.

Hence we perceive that, even in the concerns of this life, even in the matters which pertain to our earthly wellbeing, although this is not the peculiar province of Faith, its power has been great and wonderful; nay, has been such that it may be said in a manner to have *overcome the world.* When God sent forth man *to subdue the earth, and to have dominion over every living thing that moveth upon it,* Faith was the sword which He put into man's hand, wherewith that conquest was to be achieved: and so far as it has been

achieved, it has only been achieved through Faith. Whatever difference there is between the face of England at this day, when the land from North to South, and from East to West, is the garden of plenty, and is strewn over with peopled cities and towns and villages and hamlets, where neighbours dwell together in peace and prosperity, in the bosom of their families, surrounded by the innumerable conveniences and comforts which have sprung from the marriage of Nature with Art, — whatever difference there may be between this and the face of England two thousand years ago, when vast forests and swamps and morasses spread from sea to sea, inhabited by wild beasts, and by men scarcely less wild,—this difference is altogether owing to the power and workings of Faith, in one or other of its manifold forms. Without a lively practical Faith in the permanence of the laws of Nature, and a strong reliance on their active aid, none of the labours of husbandry would ever have been undertaken. Without much of Faith in each other, much of mutual confidence and trust, there could be no social union, no cooperation among men. Without the expectation of a demand for the produce of his industry, no artisan would engage in his calling. Even money itself, the unbeliever's chief idol, like everything else that is symbolical, like everything the worth of which arises, not from what it is, but from what it represents, is a creature of Faith: and all commercial prosperity rests upon *Credit* and *Trust*, and is in proportion to their strength (z). So that Faith is not only the sword wherewith man is to subdue the earth, but also the sceptre wherewith he is to rule over it.

Faith, we have seen, is absolutely indispensable to man, even when he is dealing with outward things, in order

to make them minister to his sustenance and outward wellbeing. It is indispensable as the ground of all agricultural and commercial activity. The visible world however is not properly the region of Faith: nor are things pertaining to the body the proper ends for which its power is to be put forth. They have only become so, because, even as the member of a visible world, man is still a spiritual being, and because all true power is spiritual in its origin, and abides with that which is spiritual, with the Mind, with the Heart, with the Will. Still this is one of the lowest among the provinces of Faith, one of the lowest of the services it renders to humanity. Of deeper interest and importance is it, to look at Faith in its connexion with the higher parts of our nature: where in like manner we shall find that it is the root and foundation of whatever is noble and excellent in man, of all that is mighty and admirable in his intellect, of all that is amiable and praiseworthy in his affections, of all that is sound and stable in his moral being.

Here let me remind you how the state and condition in which we enter into life, have been so ordered and appointed, that infancy and childhood must needs be to all a perpetual exercise of Faith. During the first years of life we cannot do anything, we cannot know anything, we cannot learn anything, not even to speak, except through Faith. A child's soul lies in Faith as in a nest. He is so fashioned, is brought into the world in such utter helplessness and dependence, that he cannot do otherwise than put Faith in the wisdom and in the love of all around him, especially of his parents, who in this respect chiefly stand in the stead of God to him. He must believe in them entirely, with a living practical Faith, nurturing his soul

with what he receives from them. He must believe that they know what is for his good, and that they wish it. If he did not, if he doubted them, if he were to resolve that he would not rely on them, but on himself, he would not live a day. If he distrusted his parents love for him, he would starve. If he distrusted their wisdom, his mind would never learn to stand and walk: it would continue to crawl about on the earth. Indeed this is the effect of distrust, of unbelief, not merely in childhood, but at all ages. Only by Faith can we stand. The mind of the unbeliever never lifts itself up from the ground, so as to gain a firm footing, but sprawls and crawls about on the surface, startled and checkt by every ridge and every molehill upon it.

What has just been said may help us to understand why it has been ordained that in man infancy and childhood should last so long, and occupy so large a part of the term of his earthly existence, — why he continues so long in a state of helplessness and dependency, so long under restraint and tuition. The time taken up by his nonage would be altogether disproportionate, were we to look merely at the exercise of his bodily functions as the end of his being, and to compare his organic structure with that of other animals. If the lot of man were merely to live through his appointed span on earth, it would be wasteful that so much painful toil and anxious care should be necessary to prepare him for doing so. But every child that comes into the world, is to be trained up not merely as an heir of time, but as an heir of eternity. He is to be trained to live a life of Faith. Therefore was it expedient that he should continue so long under the discipline of Faith. This is the noble and awful office of all

those who are set to train up the young, of all parents and teachers: and they should ever bear distinctly in mind that it is so. Above all, should this thought be the animating and regulative principle of those who exercise any of the momentous functions assigned to our body by God, and by the wisdom of our ancestors, — that every student committed to their charge is an heir, not of time, but of eternity.

Moreover, as the helplessness in which we come into the world is a sign and witness to us of our spiritual helplessness, of our utter inability to help ourselves, and of our absolute need of some Being more powerful than ourselves to help us, — as it should give us a lively sense of this our need, should destroy all selfreliance, and should lead us, our lives through, to place our whole reliance in our Almighty Helper, without whom we could not but perish, — in like manner do we come into the world in utter ignorance, to the end that we may be constrained to feel how we know not, nor can know anything, without the aid of a teacher. For the same essential law extends over both parts of our nature, the intellectual, no less than the moral. As we can have no true Holiness or Righteousness, except it descend upon us from above, and be received by our souls with a submissive selfsacrificing Faith, so by Faith alone can we become partakers of true Wisdom, of that Wisdom which dwelt with God *from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.* Wherefore childhood is not to be regarded as a preparation for an afterlife to be spent in a different element: nor is the Faith, whereby the souls of children are nourisht and expanded, one of those *childish things* which are to be *put away*, as though it were a cramping restraint on our spiritual

freedom, when we attain to manhood. It is not the husk, which is to drop off when the soul is fullgrown. The same heavenly fountain of light, which opens the blossom, is also to ripen the seed: nor do we need its light to work with merely, but just as much to see with. Indeed, even when we do not acknowledge or perceive it, we walk in great measure by its light: for without it we should be in utter darkness. This therefore is the living bond by which our days should be "bound each to each," — this should be the principle of unity identifying the man with the child, and ever making our hearts "leap up" when we behold any mark of the covenant and agreement between human things and divine, — our Faith. Instead of being weakened and cast aside by the development of our intellectual powers, rather should it be confirmed and daily strengthened thereby; inasmuch as all our faculties, if rightly exerted, would supply us daily with new evidences and certainties for the assurance of our Faith.

When we have thus learnt to look at childhood in its true light, as a discipline and exercise of Faith, — when we have recognized the beneficence of the ordinance, that, during our first years, our souls should grow up wholly by breathing the air, and as it were sucking the milk of Faith, — we shall perceive that the aim of a wise farsighted education will not be merely to make use of Faith as an instrument for the cultivation of our other faculties, but to cultivate Faith itself, as of all our powers the one which has the widest grasp, which stretches the furthest, and is the most universal in its application, being equally indispensable to the highest of mankind as to the lowest, and in the least things as in the greatest. Hence we shall easily discern the hollowness of divers paradoxes concerning

education, which have been cast up during the last century by the restless eddies of popular opinion: paradoxes I call them, although they have gained credence far and wide; because they are entirely at variance with the practice and doctrine of earlier simplerminded generations. For example, hence we see how rightly, in ages before men were dazzled by the glare of their own ingenuity, it was deemed the fundamental principle of a wholesome education to bring up children in full strict unquestioning obedience. For every act of obedience, if willing and ready, not the result of fear or of constraint, is an act of Faith; and that too in one of its higher manifestations, as Faith in a person, shewing its power of overcoming the world in that very point in which the struggle is the toughest, — by overcoming the spirit of selfwill born and bred in all such as are made in the image of him who first set up his own will against the commandment of God. Therefore is obedience rightly esteemed so precious an element of character, betokening, not, as presumption conceits, weakness, but strength, true, mature, selfsubduing strength, — not the want of a resolute will, capable of determining for itself, but a will truly resolute, a will which has disentangled itself from the many-knotted snares of our carnal nature, even from those so subtile and unfelt, wherein we fancy ourselves to be most free, of our vanity and pride. Whereas the practice, now far too prevalent, of refraining from requiring obedience of children, without at the same time explaining the reasons for requiring it, by depriving the obedience of its personal Faith and confiding submission, deprives it in great measure of its worth as an habitual element of the character; while, by appealing to the child's own understanding as the supreme and qualified

judge of what he ought to do, it fosters that spirit of selfreliance, which springs up too readily in every heart, and which the world in these days does so much to pamper. In fact so far have we lost the true Christian knowledge of human nature, and relapst into a heathenish anthropolatry, that the encouraging a spirit of selfdependence is become an avowed aim in the modern theories and practice of education: and it seems to be an axiom assumed in these, as well as in modern theories of government, that no man, woman, or child ought to lower his dignity so far, as to believe and trust in any wisdom higher than his own. Yet, while we thus exalt and worship the very dregs of human nature, we have by a judicial forfeiture lost the Faith in its true dignity. Governments have cast away the Faith in their own rightful authority; fathers and mothers have let slip the Faith in theirs: through a mock humility they have shrunk from asserting it: and so, not having that Faith in themselves, they have been unable to implant it in their subjects and children; whence the convulsions, by which all ancient Faith and every ancient institution have been shaken, have ensued by a natural consequence. For they who sow the wind, are sure to reap the whirlwind.

Another manifestation of the selfsame errour is the illjudged pleasure which so many parents take in the precocious development of the reasoning faculty in their children, — in hearing them ask for the reason of everything that they are told, or that they are desired to do, — in hearing them utter that mysterious word *Why*, — a word which one cannot well hear without something of awe from the lips of a little child, bearing witness, as it does, of a mind and will no longer at one with truth, but doomed

to seek it by striving to pierce through the inward and outward darkness, whereby they are separated from it. The time for reasoning will arrive soon enough, the time when we must say *Why*. Often and often have we to say it, as we journey on in search of Wisdom, whether speculative or practical, — happy if we get any distincter answer to it than an echo, — but most unhappy if we waste and starve our reason in repeating and prolonging that echo. When the time for saying *Why* comes, let us say it, with a stout heart of Faith: let us wrestle with Truth, as Jacob wrestled with the angel, and refuse to part from it, until it gives us its blessing. But to precipitate this time in children is unwise and unkind; and produces minds, all sail and no ballast, which are driven along before every puff of wind, in momently danger of upsetting, — minds which catch fire from their own restless revolutions.

Perverse too and enervating is the practice of coaxing or fondling a child into obedience, of winning obedience from love, in its more superficial external workings, rather than, as a duty, from Faith. Let Faith be the primary principle; and love will follow, and be dutiful and stedfast. All other love is wavering and capricious. Indeed I cannot but think that this very habit of a weak fondling unbelieving affection on the part of parents is among the causes of that want of due honour for the parental name and authority, so lamentably common in these days, especially among young men; from whose language one might often suppose that they scarcely look on their father in any other light than as a restraint and curb on the indulgence of their own will. Not having been bred up to submission on a reverential principle of Faith, their selfwill disdains submission on any other principle, and rears against all

controll. Let me refer to one indication of this,—a trifling one it may be deemed; but assuredly it is not an unmeaning one: I allude to the habit which sons have, in speaking of their father, to disguise and disclaim the bond of natural affection, and to call him *governor*, as the vulgar phrase is; a phrase which must needs be painfully offensive to every person of right and reverent feelings, and seeming to imply a shrinking from that sacred name, which God has hallowed by taking it to himself.

Still more noxious is another habit, which also is deplorably common, of bribing children into obedience. Forgetting that the end they ought ever to keep in view is to infuse and cultivate Faith, many parents are content if they get the dead works of obedience performed any how, and will promise their children some plaything or dainty, if they will only do as they are bid. Hereby, through a self-indulgent weakness, to spare themselves a little pain and trouble, they encourage stubbornness, and reward disobedience: for the reward, which would not have been bestowed on a prompter compliance, is in fact earned by the previous resistance. Moreover they do what in them lies to strengthen the child's carnal sensual propensities, which are far too strong already, while they weaken his Faith. They appeal to his senses, as allowedly the most effective principle whereby he can be wrought upon: and they teach him that, even in doing his duty, he is not to do it for its own sake, but for the sake of some paltry outward gratification to be gained by it. They teach him that God's judgements are less to be desired than gold, and far less sweet than honey; and that in keeping them there is no reward, comparable to an apple or a toy.

Above all, hence may we perceive the heinous folly of

that unholy and degrading doctrine, that the truths of religion are not to be instilled into the minds of children, that the names of God and Christ are never to be mentioned to them; because forsooth their Understandings cannot frame an accurate conception of God. And what Understanding can? Must we not still confess with Elihu, that, *touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out?* Nay, what Understanding can make any advances toward such a conception, save by degrees, receiving it first by Faith, implicitly, dimly, with humble awe, and then endeavouring to search out more and more of the infinite meaning of the truth it has received? When the Understanding goes forth, in its own strength, on a voyage of discovery, thinking to take possession of an unknown God, it ever finds that *He makes darkness his secret place*, and that *His pavilion is dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.* Yet still, as of old, *the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* And surely this thought must be a consolation to the intellect, — prone as it is to forget and weary of the things that are behind, and only to rejoice when pressing onward to what is before, — that it shall always have something before it, — that it shall never *find out God to perfection*, — that in Him there is a treasure of Truth, which countless ages of ever-increasing wisdom will not exhaust. Besides, what is there that a child can fully comprehend, either in itself, or in the outward world? Poor and scanty will be the stock of our knowledge, if we are never to learn anything, except what we can master from the first. What right too can any one have to rob a child of the most precious part of its inheritance, of its inheritance in the kingdom of heaven? In the children of religious parents it may often be seen, — and sometimes,

by a wonderful and inexplicable dispensation, even in the children of parents who have lived without God in the world, — that a truly deep and strong feeling of God's mercy and love may spring up in the heart of a very young child, and that He still *ordaineth strength out of the mouth of babes and sucklings*, that He may put his enemies to silence. We may see in them that our Lord was not merely speaking figuratively, when he said that *of such is the kingdom of heaven.* Indeed we who bring young children to Christ from their very birth, may feel assured that the Holy Spirit will be ever ready to work in their infant hearts, fostering and ripening every seed of godliness which their parents may sow in them.

These hints may serve to shew how momentous the work of Faith is in the intellectual and moral education of man. It is so from the very first unfolding of the infant heart and mind; and so it continues as we grow in years. A child cannot learn his alphabet, cannot learn the name of anything, cannot learn the meaning of any word, except through Faith. He must believe, before he can know. This, which is the law of our intellectual being, at all stages of our progress in knowledge, is most evidently so at the first stages. If the child did not believe his teachers, if he distrusted or doubted them, he could never learn anything. In like manner the whole edifice of our knowledge must stand on the rock of Faith; or it may be swallowed up at any moment, as has been seen in the history of philosophy, by the quicksands of scepticism. Faith too must be the cement whereby all its parts are bound together, each to each; or a blast of wind will scatter them. Every fresh accession of knowledge requires fresh exercises of Faith, — Faith in evidence, — Faith in the criterions, and

in the faculties, by which that evidence is to be tried. Faith too is indispensable as the motive principle whereby alone we can be impelled to seek after knowledge. Only by Faith can a man be inspired to desire knowledge, as a thing excellent in itself, and worthy to be ensued through years of laborious study. For it is not a thing that we can feel or see. The mind alone can give substance to it, and cherish an assurance of its worth. Often it lies far away, out of all ken; and he who longs and strives after it, knows not what he is longing or striving after: he merely wishes to know truth, without foreseeing what manner of thing the truth he wishes for may be. Only he feels assured that, if he does seek earnestly and diligently, he shall find; and that the discovery will be an overpayment for all the trouble it may cost him. At every step too, few or many as they may be, toward the attainment of this knowledge, which is never laid hold of at once, — more especially at the first steps, — do we need to be supported by Faith, lest we be disheartened by the difficulties we must encounter. For in every undertaking the first steps are hard and irksome: only by degrees do we get used to the new motion, and cease to feel it as constraint. Nor can we at all clearly make out how these first steps will lead to the knowledge we are seeking. It is long before we get so much as a Pisgah view of the promist land: and there is ever more or less of a wilderness to traverse, ere we reach it. We have to begin in the dark, trusting to our teachers, trusting to the experience of others, believing, and acting upon the belief, that after a time, if we persevere, light will dawn upon our path, and that we shall behold and enjoy that knowledge which we have diligently and faithfully pursued. We must have seen in the visions of Faith that

our Rachel is *beautiful and wellfavoured:* so alone shall we be willing to serve seven years for her; which years will then *seem but a few days for the love we bear to her.* Then too, even though we may be deceived the first time with a Leah, we shall gladly go through another seven years of service, if so be we may thereby at length gain the true Rachel.

They more especially, who are to attain to any eminence in knowledge, must have a strong Faith in the desirableness of knowledge for its own sake, not for any end of personal distinction, or for any advantage, save that which lies in the actual possession of the knowledge, simply and solely because the mind of man is made to gaze upon Truth, and because this contemplation is its own reward. And here let me be allowed to express a doubt, whether, in the changes enacted of late years in the system of this university, sufficient regard has been paid to the cultivation of Faith, to the upholding of this great principle, that Truth, of whatsoever kind, is to be desired and aimed at for its own sake. The branches of learning here selected as the objects of instruction may indeed in one sense be regarded as means; so far as they are selected on account of their fitness to develope and strengthen the character, especially the intellect, to prepare it for ulterior studies, or to qualify it for the able performance of the duties of practical life. Thus we may justly prize knowledge to a certain extent as the means of personal improvement. On the other hand whatever tends to make knowledge valued as the means of personal distinction, debases it; while at the same time it debases the character which is stimulated by such a motive; thus counteracting that very effect whereat we ought chiefly to aim. Those

alterations have indeed been made with the best intentions, but perhaps in some measure under the influence of that delusion, by which our age has been so infatuated, — the idolatry of means, of mechanism, of the Understanding, and of all it gives birth to: and there seems to be something like a want of Faith, in distrusting the power of Truth to win the youthful heart, unless she can bribe it with honours, and make it drunk with emulation. Yet surely we in this place have strong arguments to uphold our Faith, surrounded as we are by the memory and the memorials of the power she has exerted over the hearts of men for so many centuries. *Walk about Zion; go round about her; tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following,* — yea, that ye may tell it aloud in the ears of this generation, all these buildings were raised by the faithful love of Truth, in order that there might never be wanting those who should wait at her altars; and thousands upon thousands of her servants have been nurtured here age after age, and have been strengthened and confirmed in their devotion to her. We are often taunted with lagging behind the age: let us at least do so in this. Let us *stand in the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.* However the races of the swift, and the shouts of the crowd, may sound in our ears, let this be a sanctuary uninvaded by the tumult of competition, unsullied by the dust of emulation. Even if the promotion of knowledge were the sole purpose we ought to have in view, that purpose is rather thwarted than furthered by such means. For surely the knowledge we desire to promote, must be a permanent increasing possession, not a mere instrument to be thrown aside when the momentary object is attained.

And I would further crave leave to express a doubt, whether the dearth of deep, extensive, and accurate learning in these days, the rarity of a zealous enduring activity in any special department of knowledge, the rapid abandonment of the studies followed in this place by many of those who have no longer the same stimulants to spur them on, be not in great measure owing to the faithless practice of trusting to emulation and competition as the main motives of exertion; whether the golden apples which Knowledge drops by the way, do not rather check than draw on her pursuer; and whether, while our system is thus hurtful even to the successful few, it does not altogether damp the efforts of many more, who soon find themselves distanced and thrown out of the course. In this matter also, I would fain believe, the most powerful ally we can call to our aid, is Faith. Only through Faith, and by that patience and perseverance which a firm Faith alone can give, has knowledge ever been increast and exalted. Here again has it often been seen how Faith, in all its forms, is the victory which overcometh the world. In almost all ages there have been not a few, who, from the love of knowledge, — that is, from a desire for the knowledge of things as yet unknown, from a love therefore, of which the ground and principle was Faith, — have turned away from the world, and have closed their hearts against its temptations, and have been careless of its honours, and have cast away its bribes, and have disregarded its scoffs, deeming all other things loss in comparison with the unseen object of their hopes. Yet, as we read that, when Solomon besought God to give him an understanding heart, God said that He would also give him that which he had not askt, both riches and honour, so that none among the

kings of the earth should be like him, — thus has it often happened to those who have sought after wisdom and knowledge with a selfdenying, selfsacrificing Faith. They too have gained more than they sought. They have gained honour and power, if not during their own lives, yet for hundreds, or even thousands of years after their deaths. The names of kings and princes and of mighty warriors have turned pale by the side of theirs. Nay, in the course of ages they too have so far overcome the world, as to lift mankind out of savage ignorance into the light of comparative knowledge and civility.

Indeed the very faculty of wishing is an indication of our being formed to live by Faith. For what are the things we wish for? Not what we have already. Not, at least in most cases, what we see before us. The wishes of a being endowed with Reason and Understanding and Imagination stretch beyond the range of his senses. To wish for sensual things is covetousness, which therefore is idolatry, the transfer to the idol, of that which belongs to the idea. It is a perversion of the power of wishing, turning it away from the unseen and invisible to the outward and carnal and visible. When thus abused, our wishes make us still more the slaves of the world, and embitter that slavery with wearing anxieties, insatiable cravings, and gnawing repinings. Their true meaning and purpose is to shew that we are not at home where we are, that we are not at one either with ourselves or with the world, that neither are we what we ought to be, nor is the world. Hence the great Apostle exhorts us to *desire spiritual gifts, earnestly to covet the best gifts*, which are altogether objects of Faith, which Faith alone can obtain, or pursue, or even wish for. In like manner, whatsoever among the gifts of this world is

deemed a worthy object of desire by the better part of mankind, — knowledge, honour, power, — is also an object of Faith; and not only while they are striving after it, but even when they have attained to it. They set their hearts on something afar off, on something invisible, on something that they can only call up by fixing the eye of Thought steadily on the mists of the future. In proportion to the energy of Faith manifested by any one in framing such a conception, and then in pursuing it earnestly and perseveringly, and in overcoming or pushing aside the temptations and other hindrances that may cross his path, is he esteemed, even by the children of this world, to rise above his fellows. One man will seek after honour. But what honour? Not that which lies and dies in the flattering tongues of the people around him, or in the shouts of crowds dinning within reach of his own ears; but that which lives in the opinions of the wise and good, and is to float on the breath of after-ages. Or what do men seek, when they seek power? It is true, they seldom seek the only pure and deathless power, the power of overcoming the world by the manifold victories of Faith. They are oftener allured by the halo which surrounds and bedims that true power, than by the naked glory of that power itself. But still the power which a magnanimous man aims at, is not a power that he is to wield with his own hands, or to see the operation of with his own eyes. It is the power of sending forth his thoughts through a land, and of embodying them durably in laws, and of writing them on the will of a people. It is the power of working where he cannot see or be seen, of working by Faith, and upon Faith. Nay, even the desire of money, of all human desires the meanest, is not the desire of that which we see

before us. We prize money, not for what it is, but for what it represents. A brute animal would not care for it.

So again, — to turn for a few moments to another side of our nature, — is Faith the animating principle and the only sound root of all our human affections. What an important element it is in the dutiful reverential love, which children should bear to their parents, we have seen already. It is implied in the very words *dutiful* and *reverential:* for there can be no duty, but what rests on Faith, no reverence, but what springs from Faith. Nor is Faith of less moment in the love which parents ought to bear to their children. Indeed it constitutes the main difference between that love and the parental instincts of brute animals. So much longer and more laborious a training being needful in the human race, — a training, the difficulty and delicacy of which increases with the increase of civilization, — the children of men were not left to a blind instinct, which civilization ever tends to weaken, and which finds place only in the mother's breast: they were committed to the keeping of a principle strong enough to make all those long years appear short, and to turn all those anxious toils into pleasures, to a principle which does not wear out, but grows stronger the more it is exercised. The peculiar characteristic of parental love is that it is forward-looking, that in the child it sees not only what he is, but what he is to be. Hereby alone is it enabled to make light of the difficulties and cares which it has daily to encounter. Hereby alone can it overcome the weaknesses of that fondness which looks only to the present. Hereby alone can it recognize that, in this world of masks and contradictions, true love must often wear the aspect of severity, and that the moral nature of the child is

to be trained and cultivated, however his carnal nature may repine and revolt against it.

May we not add, that, without Faith, there would be no such feeling as love? For what is it that we love? Not that merely which we see with our eyes. Such love would not be love, but lust. Love, in all its forms, — every feeling that deserves the name of love, — looks beyond what it sees, as it were, to the hidden sun, that is still lying below the horizon. The whole world of sight cannot satisfy it. Were there not something more, something better, something nearer akin to the soul, it would starve. Beautiful as the dawn may be, we still feel that the beauty of the dawn is the work of the unseen sun, and that the dawn perishes and fades quickly away, but that the unseen sun is everlasting. The true object of love is altogether an object of Faith, an object that we cannot know or perceive, except by Faith, the heart and the soul. In fact the very idea of man is an object of Faith. That which constitutes a man is not what we see and handle, not the hair and the flesh, the arms and the legs, the mouth and the eyes, but the unseen spirit whereby all these members are united and animated and actuated. And this unseen spirit or soul is the only object that we can truly love; as the love of this unseen immortal soul, which likewise can only be apprehended by Faith, is the one thing that true love can desire or hope for. They who lust after such things as are objects of sight, are like brute beasts that have no understanding, no Faith, no power of conceiving or imagining or believing in anything beyond what they see. To such men all the beauty and loveliness and brightness and glory of this world are in very sooth so many pearls cast before swine: they know not their worth, trample upon them, and

defile them. But love, unless it be falsely so called, is not the creature of the eye, or of any other of the senses. It does not rest upon that which it can see and grasp: nor does it fall to the ground, when that support is taken away. Being rooted in Faith, in a Faith in the moral nature of its object, it manifests itself by acts of Faith, — by reverence for the sacred purity of that moral nature, by ready selfsacrifice, by joyful selfdenial. It lives and flourishes in the absence, as well as in the presence of its object, after its death, no less than during its life. Having recognized that the beauty of the dawn is the work of the unseen sun, it still feels, when evening darkens into night, that the sun is not lost, not extinguisht, — that, though hidden, it is lying below the horizon, and that in the fulness of time it will rise out of its hidingplace again. As it is only by Faith that we can love those who are with us in the body, so by Faith may we still love those who are laid in the grave. This is another of the victories whereby Faith overcomes the world. It conquers Death, and wrests his victims from him. This however it cannot do, unless there be a power from above to strengthen it; unless we have learnt to believe that Death has already been conquered, and that He who conquered it conquered it for us; in other words, unless we believe that Jesus is the Son of God. This therefore belongs to a subsequent part of our argument. But, even on this side of the grave, in no portion of our nature is there a deeper need of Faith. For fierce and obstinate and deadly is the war which the senses wage against it: nor is there any other warfare in which they have gained so many desolating victories. Through their blasting contamination those feelings, which were designed to be the first of our earthly

blessings, have been the most dreadful of our curses, and have caught more souls in their toils than any other angel of hell. Much do we need the assurance of Faith that there can be no true joy in love, unless it be pure and holy. We need it to quell our insurgent senses: we need it to crush our tumultuous passions: we need it to silence our deceiving understanding, which is ever ready with a host of sentimental sophistries to snare the heart into sin. In many respects, one may trust, the intellect of mankind has on the whole wrought good: but in this, I am afraid, if we look through the literature of all nations, we shall find that it has done immeasurably more for the corruption than for the purification of the soul, far more to inflame the Senses, and to delude the Judgement, than to confirm Faith.

And as Faith, whereby we recognize the moral nature of our brethren, is the ground of all our social affections, so for the happiness of life is it indispensable that we should put Faith in our brethren, that we should trust them and trust in them; not wholly indeed, — not so as to make them our sole, or our main stay, — but so that we may work together cheerfully and confidingly in the various tasks of duty. Our attention has already been drawn to the importance of Faith as the condition of all commercial enterprise. In fact it constitutes the chief difference between savage and civilized life. Among savages every man's hand is against his brother; and they know it: hence they dwell aloof from each other. But we, who dwell together beneath the sheltering roof of law, feel that every man's hand is to a certain extent with his brother. Notwithstanding all that selfishness does to insulate us, notwithstanding the faithlessness which we behold in our own hearts, and which we therefore ascribe to our

neighbours, we feel that we can put some trust in each other, that in certain emergencies of difficulty we may rely on our neighbours to help us. Thus, in order that men should live together in the bonds of social union, it is necessary that they should live by Faith. No such bond would ever have been formed, except through a Faith in its power; and only by the same Faith can it be maintained. The more too men live in Faith one with another, the more they live in mutual trust and confidence, the more they open their hearts to each other, the happier, the nobler, the better will their life be. Still, as at the beginning, it is not good for man to be alone. It is not good for his earthly happiness: it is not good for his moral wellbeing. If he does not see the image of God in his brother, he will worship it, shattered as it is and disfigured, in himself. But he who is without Faith in his brethren is alone. His companions only make him feel how utterly alone he is. He is as much alone, as if he were lying in his grave; and sees nothing about him but rotten hearts, and mouldering wormeaten souls. Righteously too have jealousy and suspicion been ever regarded as among the meanest and most hateful features of the human character, as features which cannot coexist with any gentle or generous feeling. And as they poison the heart in which they lurk, so do they not only blight the happiness, but degrade the character, of those who come under their shadow. For in this respect also is Faith of marvellous power. To think and believe ill of our brethren is the very way to make them what we believe them to be: to think and believe well of them encourages them and makes them better. Your despair of them drives them also to despondence: your hope of them fills them with hope.

The one dismays them, almost as if they saw the spectre of their sins stalking abroad in the sight of the world: the other is like the angel of their better nature cheering them and beckoning them forward. The most conspicuous examples of this are those of such frequent occurrence in war; where there is the most immediate occasion for combined energy; and where the noblest, and perhaps the most valuable quality in the character of a general is confidence in his soldiers. Your hearts must have glowed, when you heard of that heroic and sublime battlecry, *England expects every man to do his duty.* What then must have been its power on those who heard it, with the enemy full in sight! The spirit that gave it could not but conquer: well might he feel that in giving it he had done the utmost he could do: and the shout that replied to it from the whole fleet was an instantaneous assurance of victory. This too was one of the victories of Faith. So will it ever be. Unless we trust in our brethren, unless we hope well of them, we ourselves shall have no heart to labour for them; nor shall we be able to stir and rouse their hearts. But if we do trust in them, and in this trust lead them on boldly, our Faith will draw them after us; and they will oftener surpass our expectation, than fall short of it.

Great as the power of Faith is in all the lower provinces and offices of our being, it is no less, — rather is it still greater, — in the highest, in our moral nature, of which it is the indispensable groundwork. This is a topic at which we can only take a glance: any attempt to do more would entangle us in investigations too prolix and abstruse. The controversies which have arisen about the first principles of ethics, and the degrading

sophistry which has maintained that all the springs and principles of human conduct lie originally in the region of the senses, shew the absolute necessity of Faith to direct and steady us even in moral speculation. Indeed all the primary principles and ideas of morality belong wholly to Faith, never come within the ken of the senses; nor can they be elicited from the senses, or their objects, by any abstractions of the Understanding. Unless we feel them in ourselves, unless we have a full Faith in our inward consciousness, unless we rest, heart and soul and mind, on the truths it declares to us, we have no foundation to build on. The first principles inhere in our spiritual nature: we cannot pick them up without us: and in this as in other departments of knowledge the business of reasoning is to evolve the truths involved in those first principles, and to shew their consistency and harmony. If a man will not believe that he has a Conscience, you cannot convince him of it, as you might convince him that he has a spleen, by an anatomical process: you cannot cut open his soul, and lay it bare to the bodily eye. Nor can you compell him to acknowledge the ideas of Duty and of Right by any arithmetical or geometrical operation. You can only try to awaken his Conscience, which must be its own evidence: you must try to shew him that his own heart and soul bear involuntary witness to the truth which he denies. Else, so long as we follow the windings of our reasoning, without some positive reality to guide and controll us, we are for ever stumbling upon suicidal doubts. "To be, or not to be?" this is the question, which we argue at every step, with regard to every truth. Yet such a question can hardly be put, except on the brink of selfdestruction; unless it be with a full assurance of the

answer, for the sake of taking up the truth of Faith among the truths of Reason. The history of philosophy has shewn again and again, that, when men will not believe in spiritual realities, they cannot stop short here. They are borne on in their negative course, and with a far greater right deny the reality of the objects of sense: so that the senses themselves require the sanction of Faith. The truth alone can make us free, even intellectually.

But it is in practical morality that Faith, being so essentially a practical principle, the spring and life of all action, is all in all. Our Reason, when rightly employed, may discern many speculative truths. Until they are substantiated however and vivified by Faith, they exercise no practical influence on our lives. It is not written, that we stand by Reason, but that we *stand by Faith*. It is not written, that the just live by Reason, but that *the just live by Faith*. By Reason no man ever lived, no man ever stood. For we cannot stand upon ourselves: we cannot breathe in a vacuum. We must have something to stand on, something to breathe: and this we receive from Faith. And surely there can be no one amongst us, who can be such an idolater of Reason, that he will refuse to give thanks to our Heavenly Father, for that these things are so. Surely it is a great comfort, a great blessing to man, that he has something to stand by, something to live by, beside Reason; which, even when strongest, is so feeble practically, and which in the great majority of mankind never half opens its eyes. Else it would have been a happy event for man, that he ate of the tree of knowledge, had that tree been also the tree of life; had the mere knowledge of good and evil been enough to make him choose the good and refuse the evil. But it is not so.

The whole story of the world declares that it is not so. The story of every heart declares that it is not so. Although good and evil are not set before us nakedly, but along with blessing and cursing, — although the experience of all mankind, and that of our own hearts, declares that this fellowship is indissoluble, — we refuse the good, which is blessed, and choose the evil, which is accursed. For, though we have the knowledge, it is dead knowledge. We have no Faith in it; and it has no power over us. Thus the origin of the weakness and frailty and corruption of our Nature lies in our want of Faith ; in this, that we will not and cannot believe what our Reason and Conscience proclaim to us.

Every moral idea, we have seen, is an object of Faith. Whatsoever power it may have exercised over mankind from the beginning of time down to this day, it can only have exercised through Faith. And so that grandest and mightiest idea, which this world, viewed solely by itself, suggests to us, — that idea which concentrates all our human affections, and gives a living reality to all our moral speculations, — the idea of Country, is also an object of Faith, and can only act through Faith. It is a cheering spectacle, in the midst of so much that excites deep sorrow and shame, to behold the sanctity and the power of this idea in the two great heathen nations of antiquity, to see with what devotion their noblest children worshipt this their earthly deity, with what ready zeal they brought their choicest sacrifices to it, how gladly they laid their lives upon its altar. Most touching too is it to read the outpourings of the love which the children of Israel bore to their Zion and Jerusalem. This sacred idea of patriotism, this love

of country, which animated our fathers, and by which their language, every national institution, and the very ground beneath their feet were endeared to them, has, I am afraid, been greatly bedimmed and enfeebled of late years. Instead of revering ancestral institutions, we idolize modern abstractions, and lose our individuality in a cosmopolitical indifference. Yet this our England, the noble mother of so many illustrious children, of so many whose names shine among the brightest in the annals of earthly fame, of so many whose names are written in the Book of Life, — this our England, that feeds and trains our spirits with the wise and glowing words of so many poets and philosophers, the glory of the earth, — whose sacred buildings, yea, whose very air has been hallowed by the prayers of saints and martyrs for thirty generations, — surely this our England, with so rich a dower of earthly and heavenly treasures, well deserves to be the queen of all our earthly affections. Or is her claim to them, which the heathens would have acknowledged with triumphant exultation, lessened and forfeited, because all that is excellent in this world is linkt in inseparable union with the Church of God? Surely, brethren, she has still the highest earthly right to all our love, to our fullest devotion. It should be our joy and pride to serve her, yea, to offer ourselves up for her service.

Let me conclude by suggesting to you, my brethren, that there is also another object in which it behoves you to have Faith, — even in your own selves. Marvel not at what I say. Many of you, yea, doubtless every one of you already feels too much confidence in himself. One of you trusts in his strength or nimbleness

of limb, another in his comeliness, another in the refinement of his manners, another in his ready memory or quickness of apprehension, another in the play and spring of his fancy, another in his logical acuteness or penetration, another in his learning or knowledge. Many may deem they have several of these grounds for confidence in themselves; some perhaps deem they have all. One and all we trust far too much in the tinsel and trappings in which our souls are arrayed, in the particular gifts we may have received, in the faculties we may have acquired, in that which belongs to us, in that which lies on this side of our consciousness, and keeps us from looking beyond. But in our souls, in our real selves, in our immortal spirits, few have much Faith, most none. These our souls can only be discerned by Faith; and by Faith alone can we estimate their value. My young friends, have you ever been wont to consider what precious things your souls are? They are precious even in the eyes of those who love you among men. They are precious in the eyes of your parents, whose hopes are bound up in you. They are precious in the eyes of your brothers and sisters, of your friends, to whom your good name will be a blessing, your shame the deepest of woes. They are precious in the eyes of your Country. She calls you forth to serve her in posts of honour and power. Some of you will be called hereafter to serve her in the administration of her laws. Some of you will take part in her legislature. Some of you will have to distribute the wealth you inherit from your ancestors. Some may be employed in increasing her wealth in the various departments of commerce. The province of some will be to exercise your gifts in healing

the diseases of the body. Some, a consecrated band, are purposing to devote yourselves to the office of waiting around the altar of God, and dispensing the Bread and the Word of Life. All these are noble and glorious callings, noble and glorious because they are girt with duties: and greatly favoured are you, whom God has chosen to serve Him in the high places of His kingdom, you, whom He raises above others, in order that you may minister to others. You will go forth into all parts of the land: and on the manner in which you fulfill your appointed task, the weal and prosperity of England for the next, nay, for many generations, will in no slight measure depend. To each and all of you may I say, *England expects every man to do his duty.* If you serve her faithfully and strenuously, with zealous hearts and holy lives, the calamities, which at times appear to be threatening her, may through God's blessing be averted. If you are faithless, if you betray and forsake the service of your country, to serve your own lusts, to gain pleasure for yourselves, or riches for yourselves, or power or honour for yourselves, — then . . . O may God vouchsafe to raise up others who will serve her better than you! In her eyes, in the eyes of England, my young friends, your souls are very precious. But still more. They are precious in the sight of the angels that stand before the throne of God. They are precious in the sight of God Himself, who gave His Son to die for you. They are precious in the sight of His Eternal Son, who shed His blood upon the Cross to save you. They are precious in the sight of the Holy Spirit, who came down upon you at your baptism, and is ever watching over you to sanctify you.

My dear friends, let your souls, which are thus precious in the sight of your parents, of your brothers, of your companions, of your country, which are thus precious in the sight of the holy angels, which are thus precious in the sight of the Triune God, — let them be precious in your own sight. Cast them not away on vanity and frivolity; starve not, nor wither them in the toils of interest or ambition; yield them not up to be defiled and rotted by the lusts of the flesh: watch carefully lest such precious jewels be injured or polluted by any manner of impurity: and pray continually to God, that, as He has called you to His salvation, so He will vouchsafe to fulfill His good work in you, and to render you faithful and zealous to serve Him in whatsoever path He may ordain for you.

SERMON V.

POWER OF FAITH AMONG THE HEATHENS, AND AMONG THE JEWS.

1 John v. 4.
This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

The first part of these sermons was employed in considering the nature and character, the seat, and the province of Faith. Owing to the difficulties in which this question has been involved, and to the many hurtful errours which have prevailed with regard to it, we were compelled to discuss it at considerable length: and I endeavoured to establish that Faith is not merely a speculative, but mainly a practical principle, — that its seat is not solely in the Understanding, but still more in the Will, — and that its province is not confined to those truths which lie beyond the reach of Reason, but that, agreeably to the description given in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it embraces the whole invisible world, and must be exerted more or less in all man's dealings with whatsoever lies beyond the immediate span of the senses, and the cravings of the present moment. So that the provinces of Faith and Reason, instead of being distinct, may rather be said to be coextensive, — not indeed in reality, with reference to the intellectual and spiritual condition of man, at any

given point of time, but ideally. Every truth of Reason, if it is to exercise any practical influence, must also become a truth of Faith, must be recognized and substantiated by the Will, must be cut off from the Tree of Knowledge, and grafted into the Tree of Life. Every truth of Faith too, if it be a truth at all, must also be a truth of Reason; although the Reason of man, in its present imperfect development, may not yet have apprehended it as such. For Faith, being the faculty whereby we are to live, cannot wait for the tardy advances of Reason. It runs before, and spies out the land, which Reason will afterward explore slowly, and gradually, and in detail: and when Faith is borne aloft in heavenly vision, it may anticipate Reason by hundreds, or even by thousands of years. Moreover, although every truth of Faith is also a truth of Reason, — as, we may feel sure, if our Faith be strong, it will hereafter be ascertained to be, seeing that the chief hindrance to the progress of man's Reason has ever been the feebleness of his Faith, — yet their ways of apprehending their truths are very different. Reason looks at them, and about them, and searches them through and through, and makes out their bearings and relations. Faith on the other hand lays hold on them as they are, in their totality, and from the very first takes possession of them, even as Abraham through Faith took possession of Canaan: and when the objects of Faith are religious truths, it takes possession of them in the same manner, by building an altar to the Lord, by offering up its worship and thanksgiving for the revelation it has received. Nay, as it was by means of the field of Machpelah that Abraham first gained an acknowledged property in the land of Canaan, so is it by the burial of all that we were wont to hold dear, of our

former carnal sensual nature, that we are to gain an assured inheritance in the land of Faith.

Having thus been brought to the conclusion, that, whenever an unseen object, — whether it be an object of the outward world, lying beyond the immediate sphere of sight, or shining upon us and beckoning to us out of the mists of the future, or whether it be an idea or principle of the intellectual, or of the moral, or of the spiritual world, — that, whenever any such object, of whatsoever kind, exerts a practical power on the will and conduct of man, it must needs be an object of Faith, and must act upon him through Faith, we proceeded to inquire how far Faith manifests itself as an active principle in the life of man, when viewed solely as a member of this world, and to take a brief hasty survey of the chief regions of its operation. As every act, the motives of which spring from anything beyond the range of those senses, wherein our souls are "cabined and cribbed," beyond that "narrow pinfold" of space and time where we are "confined and pestered," must needs be an act of Faith, Faith, it is plain, must be the proper element of all human action; and only when man acts by Faith, can he shew forth any portion of his humanity. Thus we saw that Faith is the power whereby the earth has been cultivated and brought into subjection by mankind. It is the foundation on which all wealth and trade and commerce must rest. It is the bond by which alone society can be held together. We then traced some of the workings of Faith in man, as an intellectual and moral being. We saw how children lie cradled in Faith, as in a mother's arms; how their understandings, their affections, their moral nature can only be shaped and unfolded by Faith. Finally a few hints were given, pointing

to the great and momentous truth, that Faith is the root and pervading life of all knowledge, of all love, of all duty. The earlier parts of this review having been carried into somewhat fuller detail, we were enabled to pass more rapidly over the latter part: for the same line of argument bears upon both. Sundry questions indeed might have been started, which it would have been interesting to pursue: but the investigation could hardly have been followed out, without involving us in metaphysical subtilties. At all events they would have carried us too far. The limits assigned to these sermons warn me that it is time to wind up the argument. They warn me that I must not linger too long amid earthly thoughts, but must endeavour to lead you to the contemplation of Faith in its highest office and relation, as the eye with which the earth looks up and beholds heaven, as the bond of union between man and God.

For the sake of continuity however, to bring out the connexion between what has been said and the higher parts of the subject, it will be expedient in the first place to take up a few threads of the foregoing argument. I have tried to shew, how in every way in which man has to exercise his humanity, — whether by acting upon inanimate nature, or in his manifold relations with the beings of his own kind, — Faith is the victory that overcometh the world; how every victory over the world ever gained by man, whatever may have been its object and effect, has been gained by Faith, and by Faith only. Now in the lower regions of human action, we have seen, the victories of Faith have been great and glorious. It is true, they are nothing like what they ought to have been, nothing like what they would have been, unless the power of Faith had

been perpetually crippled and shackled and counteracted by man's corrupt will, and selfish disorderly passions and appetites. They are poor and mean in comparison with what Faith would have accomplisht, if she could have walkt abroad freely, without these hindrances and obstacles. Three fourths of the earth would not then be still lying waste at the end of her sixth millenary. Nine tenths of mankind would not be still cowering in gross darkness, scarcely broken except by the flashes of their passions. Nevertheless such is the power of Faith, whenever it has room to act at all, that, in spite of all that has checkt and retarded its progress, its achievements in these lower regions have been great and splendid. It has woven a fine network of cultivation and civilization, which is spread over the fairest parts of the earth: and it has reared a lofty tower of knowledge, the top of which holds converse with the stars. This was man's mission, when he was sent forth to subdue the earth, and to have dominion over everything upon it. He was to make everything bear the stamp and impress of his ruling mind: and he was to subdue everything, not merely for the purposes of his outward bodily, but also for those of his intellectual life, by bringing the confused mass of perceptions, which the objects of his senses present to him, under the dominion of order and law; so that, while his body was fed by the fruits of the earth, his mind shou.d be nurtured by its spirit, and should be trained and unfolded by tracing the workings of the Divine Mind, as set before him in the universe. In this mission man has gone on labouring from the first, with more or less of diligence and success, never wholly abandoning it, though never fulfilling it to perfection. For, although even in these labours he has been grievously

crampt and fettered by the evil propensities of his nature, cumbering his activity, diverting it from its proper objects, and thwarting union and concert, yet the intellectual and bodily faculties employed in such works are not the immediate seat of those evil propensities: they are the parts of his being which have suffered the least from the taint of sin. In the results of these labours therefore, imperfect and inadequate as they are, we may perceive how great is the power of a living animating active Faith: and they may serve as tokens and assurances of the wonderful effects which it would produce, if the whole man, body and heart and mind, were to flow along with the unity of a mighty river under its unresisted continuous sway. At the same time, while man in these lower provinces of his activity has done much through Faith toward overcoming the world, his victory over the world even in these respects, if viewed as the victory of Faith, has been anything but complete and clear. The conflict has not been one in which Faith has gone forth in its naked spiritual might, severing itself from everything carnal, and refusing all alliance therewith, in order to assert and establish the absolute lordship of spirit over matter. It has rather been a warfare of outposts, with an alternation of gain and loss. The world has lifted up its head again; and man, through the weakness of his Faith, has been overcome. Nay, the world has, so to say, turned his batteries against him, and armed herself with the trophies which he had erected upon her. Every victory he gained over her supplied her with new and more powerful and deadlier weapons to wield against him. She has assailed him with the luxuries of civilization, with the lust of possession, with the pride and craft of knowledge: and the self-idolater has ever been

especially ready to bow down and worship the work of his own hands. The harlot charmed him the more for the silks and jewels in which he had deckt her out: and he has been bound, as though Delilah had bound Samson with the hair which she cut from his head.

Still, notwithstanding all these drawbacks, the power and works of Faith in these lower regions have been great, at least in comparison with her feebleness in those higher regions, which more peculiarly belong to her. She could make men till the ground, and unite into communities, and build cities, and ransack every country, and every order of created things, to discover materials for wealth. In so doing she had little resistance to surmount. For, though even in such matters man cannot act except through Faith, the Faith requisite is not fixt on purely spiritual objects, but on earthly objects more or less remote from the reach of the senses. Nor is man here called upon to exert his spiritual Will in subduing his carnal Will, and making his faculties minister to spiritual ends: rather are his higher faculties employed as the servants of his carnal Will, and taskt for its purposes and ends. When this is the case, whenever man brings all the forces of his being to bear on a single purpose, even though that purpose be evil, we see proofs of the power of Faith. Nor has there been any lack of those who were ready in full confidence to set about removing mountains, if riches or honour were to be pickt up beneath them. So too has Faith been able to inspire men with an ardent unquenchable thirst after knowledge. For knowledge likewise is of an ambiguous nature, has no determinate invariable moral value, may be rendered subservient to worldly ends of gain or fame, and may thus be desired and possest by the evil as well as the good.

The serpent was the subtilest among all the beasts of the field; and his wisdom may too easily be found apart from the harmlessness of the dove. When so however, his doom is still to crawl along the ground, never to rise above it, and to eat dust all the days of his life.

But though Faith was strong enough to effect much in these ways for mankind, and was thus a weapon of great efficacy in their hands, for the purposes of their earthly life, her power lessened in proportion as her objects became more spiritual; and just when her aid was the most needed, that power almost entirely past away. In vain did Faith try to lift the affections from visible things to invisible, and to fix them steadily thereon. Vain were her efforts to give a substantial living reality to the shadowy ideas of Virtue. Her office, we have seen, is to be the copula between the Heart and the Mind, between the Understanding and the Will, the atoning principle in man's disjointed nature, investing the Affections with the sanctity of Duty, and rendering Duty a living power and presence in the soul. Now so long as Instinct enforced the commands of Duty, and a sacred horrour kept the passions at bay, Faith did indeed enable even the natural man in some measure to fulfill the obligations of parental, filial, and fraternal love. Herein we may perceive an indication that the true spiritual objects of Faith, the spiritual objects which will lead it to put forth its might, must be divine; as was recognized more or less distinctly by the wisdom of those lawgivers, who were so anxious to strengthen their laws by binding them to the throne of heaven, according to the conceptions of divine things which bore sway in their own minds, and in the minds of their countrymen. But when Faith had to pass beyond the region, where these

sanctities added authority to its voice, it became powerless, and shrank from the struggle with the fierce passions that encountered it. The idea of Chastity could not make man curb his lusts: the idea of Temperance could not calm his appetites: the idea of Justice could not repress his cupidity: the idea of Modesty could not lull his pride: the idea of Integrity could not animate him to withstand the bribes of power and favour: the idea of Truth could not withhold him from following the seductive strains of falsehood. These ideas might stand like stars overhead, bright, and pure, and far off: they might be gazed at in the hours of contemplative abstraction: but they exercised no power over the business of workday life, and were lost sight of amidst it. Man may admire an idea: he may hymn its praise: he may discern its truth, its beauty, its fitness, its majesty: but it has no power to constrain. Love alone can do this: and when that love has so hard a task, as that of overcoming all outward temptations, and all the evil tendencies of our nature, it must be the love of Christ, love springing from the Faith that Jesus is the Son of God.

Besides, in dealing with the outward world, man had ever-recurring palpable proofs demonstrating the validity of those laws of nature, on which he relied. In the pursuit of knowledge he was encouraged by a rich mass of evidence that it is indeed power, power both over nature and over man. Thus in neither of these instances was Faith mere Faith: it did not stand alone: it was not a pure long-sighted spiritual conviction of that which is invisible. It had outward proofs to lean on, outward confirmation to support it, as well as outward motives of a mixt character, evil as well as good, to animate it. But when it set itself

to controll and quell man's evil appetites and passions by enforcing the laws of Reason and Conscience, the whole might of the visible world fought against it; the senses confederated to deny its authority; the web, which from our earliest infancy they are daily spinning around our heart and mind, and which we find so soft and easy, so congenial to our spiritual sloth, held it down. Then it became plain, that, though men have eyes, yet they cannot see, — that, though they have ears, yet they cannot hear, — anything beyond the roar of the wheel of Time, and the spray that flashes off from it. Then was it seen how the light of earthly day sweeps all the stars out of heaven. In vain did Faith cry to the Will, to arouse itself, and shake off the bondage of the Senses. The Will would not shake it off; nay, was their voluntary servant; nay, by its own act and deed pulled down their yoke upon its neck, and riveted their chains still faster. In vain did Faith preach to the Will, that it ought to shake off its bondage. The Will said, *ay*, and fell back into its lethargy again. Faith lookt round for something to support it: but there was nothing: no creature would uphold it. The visible things, instead of being regarded as the signs and witnesses of the invisible, became their masks, and hid them from the view. To no purpose did Faith proclaim eternal laws, and appeal to eternal ideas. Laws upheld by outward sanctions, and enforced by temporal power, might indeed stand and bear authority. But laws, of which the only sanction was inward, laws resting on nothing but timeless power, were left to be gazed at in the void in which the intellect enthroned them. The idea of Duty had no sword in its hand, no hand to wield a sword. The ideas of Chastity and Temperance grew dim before the glaring

lamps of the revel. Who could look at the naked idea of Justice, when Injustice stood close by arrayed in gold and purple? At the very best, these ideas were the exclusive property of the learned and thoughtful. The poor, the ignorant, the bulk of mankind, ninetynine hundredths of the whole human race, were totally shut out from them, and saw no more of them than they see of those stars which can only be descried through a telescope. And when the idea of the Dignity of Human Nature was set up, to guide and win men to virtue, it was an idea which all experience, which every one's consciousness belied. Hence it was as ineffectual to quench men's passions, as a burnt out cinder thrown into the midst of a blazing furnace. In a word, whatever power Faith may exercise toward overcoming the world in the lower regions of human activity, — where it has so many outward motives to help it on, and where it has no ceaseless struggle to maintain against man's corrupt Will, — in its higher office, where that corrupt Will is the very enemy it has to contend against, to subdue, to elevate, it is utterly impotent, so long as man is left to himself: and this impotence arises in great measure from the want of a worthy, satisfying, living Object, whereto it might cling, and whereby it might raise itself up.

This worthy, satisfying, living Object is to be found, not in anything that the outward world can supply or imply,— not in man, either as he exists in reality, or according to the fictitious idea of his dignity,—but solely in God. God alone is the worthy Object of Faith. He alone can fill all its boundless capacities, can fulfill all its wants. He alone can endow it with that strength, which will indeed overcome the world, wholly and for ever. God will do this; none

else can. Not however the naked idea of God, as a Being of infinite power, above all the conditions of time and space, and exempt from all the limitations of personality. Faith being a living knowledge, — a knowledge differing from other knowledge, not so much in the grounds and evidence on which it rests, as in its commanding power over the Will, — He who is the worthy satisfying Object of Faith, must be a living personal Being, a Being to whom we stand in a living personal relation, who acts upon us, and will continue so to do. Nay, in its higher manifestation, as trust in Him in whom we believe, Faith requires not merely a living personal God, but a God on whose love we can rely. Now the God of what has erroneously been called Natural Religion, — the God of what might with more propriety be termed contranatural Religion, if indeed a mere creation of the Understanding can deserve the name of Religion at all, — is not such a God, as has been observed already. He is a bare notional abstraction, devised to supply a ground and consistency for the truths of Reason, — to supply a first link for the otherwise never-ending chain of causes and effects, a bond of unity for the multitudinous phenomena of the universe,—but standing in no direct personal relation to man. He is necessary indeed originally to our existence; but, so far as regards our after-life, it is the same thing whether there be such a God or no. Hence he is not an object of Faith, but solely of belief. The Reason may be brought to acknowledge him: but he will exercise no more power over the Heart and Will, than any truth of geometry or ontology. If the Heart is to be stirred, if the Will is to be roused and renewed, Faith must have a God to believe in, who is not like the God of philosophy, a shadowy complex of

negations to the conditions of time and space, shrouded in the abyss of eternity, but a God who cares for his creatures, and watches over them, and has given proof that he does so. *He who cometh to God must believe that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*

Hence the idea of God which is implied in the idolatrous worship of the heathens, defaced and distorted and fearfully corrupted as it is therein, is so far forth juster and truer than that idea which philosophy tries to set up in the centre of its exhausted receiver; inasmuch as the heathens believed that their gods would take thought about them, and would vouchsafe to hold intercourse with them, and would give ear to their prayers, and help them. Nay, they even believed that the gods could be moved with pity toward men, and could love their devout worshipers. In such a conception of God Faith has a worthy Object; and could she have clung thereto, without relaxing her hold to grasp the bloated phantoms of the senses, man would have been greatly strengthened in his warfare with the world. How marvellous the power of such Faith is, even when most grossly debased, how it quells the strongest passions, and crushes the most ineradicable instincts, may be seen at this day in the thousand-yeared superstitions of India. In the better ages of the great nations of antiquity, when the hearts of the people bowed with a willing obedience to the laws, it was in great measure on account of the religious sanctions whereby they were hallowed. Here the masters in poetry and art sought and found their inspiration. Even the domestic hearth became dearer, and men fought more bravely for it, when it was associated with the altar of the gods. Through this Faith the greatest religious teacher of the heathen world,

when his hour came, calmly and cheerfully drank the fatal hemlock.

But instances like this were very rare. There is no more humiliating and dismal example of the miserable weakness of human nature, when left to itself, — of the manner in which Faith, when it has no arm from on high to uphold it, is overcome by the world, — than when we see how those heavenly truths, which at times glimmer through the darkness of Paganism, were blotted out from sight for the most part by the vapours sent up from the pollutions and corruptions of men's hearts; or, if they were not wholly lost, served merely to illumine the mists with a fierce and bloody glare. Although the heathens had been taught to know something of God, they glorified Him not as God. Sight overpowered Faith; so that they lived not by Faith, but by sight. They gave the glory of the invisible God to the visible creature; and, as in the dream of the patriarch, the powers of heaven did obeisance to the earth. Yea, they gave that glory to the putrid exhalations of their own hearts, and set up their own foul passions, their lust, their ferocity, their cunning, their cupidity, on the throne of the heavens. Thus was the victory of the world over Faith made manifest. Such was the disruption of man's being, — into such chaotic confusion had the perversion of his Will plunged his Understanding, — that he forgot the eternal indissoluble union of holiness with wisdom and power, that of evil with weakness and folly. So long indeed as those whose intellects were more penetrating held fast to the traditionary Faith of their fathers, merely endeavouring to purge it from the impurities which human errour and frailty had attacht to it, many bright rays of truth dawned upon them;

as we see in the greatest poets and philosophers of the ancient world. But too often the Intellect only displayed its own weakness and blindness; either corrupting the olden Faith still more, by peopling it with the monstrous brood of the Imagination; or else exercising its merely negative power in destroying that Faith altogether, and calling upon the simplerminded to come and sit in the seat of the scorner. The result of which process was to give mankind up to the dominion of the senses; while the few who recoiled from this debasement, could find no way of conquering the impulses of their nature, except by extinguishing them.

God however had not left Himself without a witness upon earth. He would not so forsake mankind, as that there should not be a single eye of Faith to look up to Him among all the nations, so as that there should not be a single altar, a single heart, from which prayer and thanksgiving and praise should mount to heaven. When the whole world was turning away from Him, to enwrap itself in its own nether darkness, He called Abraham to be the father of them that believe, and promist that from him in the course of ages should spring One, through Faith in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Thus did God ordain that Faith should overcome the world. When man had given himself up to the worship of the creature, of the earth and its fruits, of the flesh and its lusts, God said, *I will light up the light of Faith in the heart of Abraham; and that Faith shall pass from father to son, and from generation to generation, until in the fulness of ages it shall spread over the whole earth. By that light man shall again see Him who is invisible, and shall live in His presence, and shall glorify Him. And this shall be the*

victory of Faith. Whereas man has given himself up to all unrighteousness, through Faith he shall be clothed in the pure righteousness of My Only-begotten Son. Through Faith sin shall be cast out from the earth. Through Faith, all the nations of the earth, whose portion now is amid cursing and woe, shall be blessed.

By Faith Enoch and Noah had already overcome the world. Enoch overcame the world so completely, that, in the midst of the world, *he walkt with God.* The veil of the world, which hides God from man, was withdrawn from before him: he entered within the veil, and was no more seen by those whose sight the veil bounds. Noah too overcame the world, so as to walk with God; and when all the children of the world were swept away by reason of their unbelief, Noah through Faith was preserved from the universal destruction. Then, when the waters abated, and Noah came forth from the ark, and built an altar to the Lord, was seen the victory by which Faith overcometh the world. Yet, notwithstanding this awful testimony to the vanity of the world, and to the power of Faith, mankind was anew swallowed up by the waters of unbelief. From that time forward, the first recorded victory gained by Faith, in its highest relation, over the world, is that of Abraham. God revealed Himself to Abraham; and Abraham believed. When God called him forth from his country, and from his kindred, and from the house of his fathers, — as He has ever called forth those in whom He has chosen to be more especially glorified, above all when He purposes to bless man with a more plenteous outpouring of His Spirit, — as He called forth Moses, — as He called forth the Apostles and the Reformers from their kindred and their fathers house, —

as He still in our days calls forth those whom He vouchsafes to make His angels in declaring His grace to the heathens, — when thus called forth, Abraham did not doubt, nor tarry, but through Faith burst the bonds of ancient habit and familiar affection, and followed whithersoever the word of God led him, knowing that the Lord of the whole earth must of all guides be the surest, of all protectors the mightiest. So again was the same power of Faith to overcome the world, to overcome the strongest yearnings of natural love, made manifest, when Abraham went forth with his son, the child of so many promises, and of such long anxious expectation, to offer him up to the Lord. By these two victories Abraham shewed that he was worthy to lead that army of the faithful, who, overcoming the world each in his own person, were in the course of ages so to overcome it for mankind, that the Son of God shall take all the nations of the earth for His inheritance, and that all His enemies shall become His footstool.

It was by direct special personal revelations of Himself, that God awakened the life of Faith in Abraham, and in the family of Abraham, by revelations of Himself as of a personal Being, and addrest directly and personally to Abraham. The Lord of heaven and earth declared Himself to Abraham, not merely, as He does to all percipient and intelligent beings, in the unity and order and wisdom and beneficence of the universe, — not merely by the voice of reason, as He does to every one who can hear and interpret that voice, — not merely in those yearnings and aspirations, which, wherever they are not quencht, point men's hearts and souls heavenward, — but in an especial and immediate manner, renewing a likeness of that

intercourse which had originally been granted to man in Paradise. Abraham was taught, that the Creator and Governor of the world does not leave mankind to the general operation of the laws He has ordained, without regard to what men may be or do or suffer; but that He watches over them severally, and overrules the course of events according to that which He sees in them. He was taught, that the Judge of all the earth doeth right, — that the natural world is not a thing by itself, working mechanically and blindly, without respect to good or evil, — but that the visible sphere of the laws of nature is encompast by a higher invisible sphere of moral law, whereby its movements are regulated and determined. He was taught, that God does not sit aloof from his human creatures, even though the imaginations of their hearts are evil from their youth, — but that He will hold communion with them, — and that, in proportion as man's Faith is strong, and works in him by an unhesitating obedience, in the same proportion will he receive plainer and more blessed assurances of that communion. By like revelations was the life of Faith preserved among the descendants of Abraham; until God saw that the people, whom He had been training in the house of bondage and of affliction, to the end that they might acquire such a strength of character as would hold fast the precious gift committed to their keeping, were grown ripe and fitted for the fulfilment of His purpose. Then, as His purpose was, that the light, which had hitherto been burning on the hearth of a single family, should be set up on high in the face of the world on the altar of a whole people, — that the truth, which had hitherto been the heirloom of one household, should be the inheritance of a nation, — such being God's purpose,

He, who had hitherto shewn Himself by private personal revelations, as the God of the family of Abraham, now manifested Himself by mighty deeds, visible in the eyes of multitudes, as the God of the earth and of all its nations, as the King of kings and Lord of lords, as the Lord of hosts, the God of battle. At the same time He revealed His name as the eternal, self-existing I AM. And as God manifested His power outwardly by a great national deliverance, by leading a herd of bondmen out of captivity, and turning them into a nation, and making them ride on the high places of the earth, — hereby bringing to pass a visible outward fulfilment of the promise He had made to Abraham, — so did He display that Righteousness, which also had been revealed to Abraham, declaring His Will under the form of national law and of national institutions. Thus, by this, the second great manifestation of Himself, God raised up a nation who should believe in Him, and who should preserve the knowledge of the living God, and the trust in Him, amid the mountains of Judea, while all the rest of the earth gave itself up to the abominations of idolatry. By these means was the knowledge of God, and the Faith in Him, to be kept alive among the Jewish people, as the principle of their national life and individuality, until the time when God Himself should appear in the form of man upon earth, and should be lifted up from the earth, that He might draw all nations to His feet, and should send forth His messengers to declare His salvation to all the ends of the world.

Such accordingly were the manifestations of God wherein the Israelites believed. They believed in Him, as the Maker of heaven and earth, as the Lord of heaven and of all the kingdoms of the earth, — as the living I AM, and

praised Him who rideth on the heavens by His name Jah. But they also felt that they had a nearer closer more special bond of union to Him. He was the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of Israel, the God who had chosen them out from all the nations of the earth to be His peculiar people, — the God who by a mighty hand and an outstretcht arm had delivered them from their bondage in Egypt, from the power of Pharaoh and of his host, — who had led them safe through the Red Sea, dividing its waters in twain, and making them pass through the midst of it, — who had wonderfully supported and preserved them through the perils of the wilderness, — who had brought them in triumph to the land of Canaan, the land promist of old to their fathers, and had driven out the heathens before them, and had given them the land for an everlasting possession. This was the firm ground of the Faith and trust which the children of Israel placed in Jehovah. This was the record and testimony which God establisht in Jacob and appointed in Israel, commanding that the fathers should make all these things known to their children, so that the generation to come might know them, and might in turn declare them to their children; in order that generation after generation might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments. The memory of these wonderful manifestations of God's uplifting power and guardian care lived in the minds of the Israelites, and gave them a lively hope and trust in Him, to whom they owed these marvellous deliverances, to whom they owed their existence as a nation, — in Him, who, after He had declared His purpose to Abraham, — though generation after generation past away without any

sign of its accomplishment, though all appearance and likelihood of its accomplishment had vanisht, and the very recollection of it had almost become extinct,—yet did not suffer His purpose to sleep, but, at the very moment when it seemed on the point of being utterly defeated, when the craft and power and cruelty of man were conspiring to overthrow it, at that very moment brought forth His people, and exalted the shepherds of Goshen into a nation, and raised up the child who was cast among the bulrushes, to be the champion and deliverer of his brethren, yea, to be their ruler and lawgiver, yea, to be the declarer of God's holy name, the utterer of God's holy law, for all the ends of the earth, and for all the generations of mankind. In reading the book of Psalms, which, according to the nature of lyrical poetry, more than any other book expresses the peculiar national feelings of the Jews, we see what a vivid recollection of these ancestral events filled and animated their souls, down to the latest age of which any memorial is there preserved. Indeed that recollection seems almost to become still more vivid in those Psalms which appear to belong to the period subsequent to the Babylonish captivity. For a nation in its glory lives in the present, a fallen and reviving nation in the past; as we ourselves have witnest in the recent history of Europe. Their later deliverance had only served to freshen the memory of that former one, from which the nation dated its birth, and to confirm and enliven the trust, which the earlier one had been designed to awaken. In truth this should always be the effect of every new mercy that we receive from God. It should not merely excite us to thankfulness on its own account, but should recall our thoughts and stir our hearts to a still

deeper thankfulness and a still firmer assurance of Faith, on account of that great primary all-surpassing proof of God's mercy, which was manifested when we too were delivered out of the house of our captivity.

This appears to be the peculiar form and character of that Faith which animated the Jews, as a people; if we look at it apart from those special inspirations, which were at times vouchsafed, along with a gift of prophetic intuition, and which taught the persons illumined by them, that the past redemption out of Egypt was mainly precious as the type of a still greater, far more wonderful, and far more blessed redemption, — that the land of Canaan given to their fathers was as a dreary wilderness, compared with the heavenly inheritance designed for the faithful, — that their beloved Jerusalem, although beautiful and glorious and the joy of the whole earth, was a poor shadowy miniature of that eternal city in the heavens, whose builder and maker is God. The Faith, which was a living principle in the hearts of the Jews, and which manifested itself so often by heroic action and endurance, — nay, which became so inwrought in them, that seventeen centuries of dispersion and oppression have not been able to destroy it, — was a Faith in Jehovah, as the God of their fathers, and their own God, who in manifold wonderful ways had shewn Himself to be the Protector of their fathers, and who had chosen them out from all the nations of the earth to be His peculiar people. In this Faith there is an element, which men may easily distort into an alliance with the evil tendencies of their nature, and which may gain a more readily acknowledged sway over them by that alliance; though it is hindered thereby in its rightful work of delivering them from the bondage of those evil tendencies.

Man, in all ages, and of almost every shade of character and belief, has been too apt to regard himself as the special favorite of heaven. Herein is involved a very crude and faint and inadequate notion of that infinite mercy and love wherewith the Almighty Creator and Redeemer embraces all His creatures. But that crude and imperfect notion is the more willingly received, because in its perverted shape it is made at once to flatter our selfish and our malignant passions. Eager to appropriate and monopolize everything, man would even appropriate and monopolize God. Although the light of God's love, when it falls on us, should humble us, by leading us to feel how dark we were without it, and should make us reflect some rays of it on every object around, yet the notion of God's special favour has often been deemed by men to sanction their thinking proudly of themselves, as though there must be something in them whereby that favour has been earned; while on the other hand they have assumed that scorn and hatred must be the due portion of those whom the divine sentence had cast out. More especially has this been the case when they have fancied that the favour of heaven was bestowed on them by an arbitrary act of Will,—when they have not discerned, or have forgotten, that the God, whom they believe to regard them with peculiar grace, is a God of holiness and justice.

By the heathens this was never discerned: at least their popular religion was often at direct variance with any recognition of this truth. To the Jews it had been declared, and fully displayed, although they were perpetually blinding their hearts to it. Along with the historical groundwork of their Faith, they had a Law, by keeping

which they were to shew forth their Faith; and every commandment in that Law was as it were a fresh step toward overcoming the world. The Righteousness of God, which had dawned on the mind of Abraham, was set forth before the eyes of the nation that sprang from him, on the stone tables of Sinai. But as the Faith of the Jews was founded on outward demonstration, on wonders wrought by a mighty hand in the sight of mankind, — as they were taught to believe in Him that overcometh the world, by visible signs that He doth indeed overcome it, — so their Law likewise consisted mainly in outward observances, being, as St Paul terms it, the rudiments fitted for the childhood of Faith. Under the patriarchal dispensation there had been no law. Infants are not trained by rules, but by the ever-present, ever-watchful love of their parents. And so, in the infancy of mankind, it was by perpetual immediate revelations that God declared His Will. Children on the other hand, when they pass out of infancy, have rules laid on them, — touch not, taste not, handle not; which rules they are to keep; and the transgression of which is followed by sensible punishment. In like manner the Law given by the hand of Moses to the Israelites, if we look not beyond the letter, was mainly a Law of outward injunctions and prohibitions, prescribing and forbidding certain outward acts; even as, in the rules given to children, outward acts are what we enjoin and forbid: for their childly capacities would not comprehend the meaning and application of a more spiritual law. At the same time, as in the rules given to children the inward principles, which are to govern their after lives, though not expressly enunciated, should always be involved and implied, — so that their obedience may pass by an easy progress through

the stage of blind implicit Faith to the higher stage of conscious voluntary intelligent Faith, — thus the inward spiritual principles are ever involved and implied in the Law of Moses. Nay, those very commandments, which our Lord declares to be the sum of the Law and of the Prophets, had already been proclaimed in the wilderness.

Nevertheless, as outward things are always separate and stubborn and loth to coalesce, while all spiritual things by an eternal harmony and concord unite into one, and blend into an image and likeness of the Father of spirits, the Faith of the Jews, which was founded on outward demonstrations of God's power, and the obedience of the Jews, which was to be shewn by the observation of an outward Law, did not grow together into an inseparable union, after the manner in which a spiritual Faith must needs grow together inseparably with a spiritual obedience. In reading the Law, as the Apostle declares of them (2 Cor. iii. 15), there was a veil upon their hearts. Often too they turned the Law itself into a veil, the letter of which darkened and concealed its spirit. Hence we may understand why, as was observed at the beginning of these sermons, there is so seldom mention of Faith, according to the fulness of the Christian idea, in the Old Testament, and why the form under which it appears is that of trust. The Jews could trust in God, and could act nobly and boldly in that trust: for a high degree of such trust may exist apart from that earnest endeavour after righteousness, which ought ever to go along with it. But few of them lived by Faith: only the just can so live: and they alone, who do live by Faith, can be just. To take up the former parallel: in children, even in those who love their parents the most, we often see strong eruptions of selfwill, and an

oblivion of their parents commands, when temptation is at hand, and their parents are out of sight. Answerable to this is what we find in the history of the Jews. Even those who were the strongest in their Faith or trust in God's upholding and protecting providence, and who by this Faith were enabled in outward act to overcome the world, to vanquish the most formidable outward enemies it could bring against them, — even those who were full of this lively animating trust, and who in this trust encountered and overthrew every obstacle, — even they, — as we perceive, above all, in the awful example of David, — could yet fall at times so wofully and appallingly, that earth might well have trembled from her entrails, and nature given another groan. Among the countless victories which the world has gained over Faith, I know none the contemplation of which so stuns and confounds us, as when he, who had gone forth a boy in undoubting Faith, and slain Goliath, — he whose life had been visited by so many mercies, and whose soul had been illumined by such bright inspirations, — the holy Psalmist of Israel, — became the murderer of Uriah.

Those who are blind to their own hearts, and whose conception of human nature is squared according to the abstractions of their understandings, account such inconsistencies proofs of hypocrisy. And crushing proofs indeed they are of the hypocrisy which is within us, and of which we ourselves are unconscious, crushing proofs of the sway which the Father of lies has gained over mankind. But the hypocrisy, the lie, spreads through the whole of our unregenerate nature, and merely strikes us with more horrour in these examples, from the bright gifts with which it is coupled. We are warned what man must be, when

even the noblest of men have such a dark chasm in their souls, — when he who seems to stand with one foot on the threshold of heaven, is tottering with the other on the brink of hell. This dark chasm meets us at every step in the history of the Jews. Their Faith itself opens our eyes to behold their miserable want of Faith, and our own. As we see in them, what a glorious thing Faith is, when it is strong and true, so in them too do we see what wretchedness and shame are man's portion, when, loosing his hold of Faith, he falls into the formless chaos of unbelief. Much had been revealed to the Jews. They alone among the nations knew with what never-slumbering care the Almighty Creator watches over His creatures, and preserves them. They alone knew His Righteousness, how His holy Will, which gives law to the universe, is a law likewise to Himself. But in proportion as their spiritual discernment became more piercing, in proportion as they gained a clearer and fuller insight into their own moral condition, in the same proportion did it become plain that the revelation was incomplete. They could not harmonize the parts of it together. If they turned their thoughts upward, to that which God had declared to them concerning Himself, they knew that He is a *jealous God*, and yet that He *shews mercy to thousands:* they knew that He *forgives iniquity and transgression and sin*, and yet that He *will by no means clear the guilty:* they knew that He is gracious and longsuffering, and yet that He is righteous and holy. On the other hand, when they lookt at themselves, they had the most certain assurances of God's favour and lovingkindness: yet they were bound to obey the Law, and, being all transgressors of the Law, had fallen under His wrath. They knew that God never

forsaketh the righteous: but they were unrighteous: how then could they trust in Him? how could they look for anything but wrath? They did not keep the Law: they could not. Although God compast them around, as the mountains stood around Jerusalem, He had not yet come down to dwell in men's hearts, and to endow them with a strength above men's own, so that they might serve and obey Him. He was near to them; but they were still far off from Him. He had chosen them to be His people; but they made themselves an abomination in His sight. The Law was the flaming sword of the Cherubim, turning every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life, and repelling them from it.

For bridging over this chasm, which still separated man from God, two ways were set before the Jews, the same in their termination, but differing apparently at the outset: and both of them were ways of Faith; as indeed every way must be, whereby man draws nigh to God. One was the way of sacrifice, by which expiation and atonement were to be made, and which was to be a type and sign of the slaying and offering up of the carnal will, the carnal nature, to God. Thus, when performed in a right spirit, sacrifices were acts of Faith. They were acknowledgements that there is a Being greater than the world, its Lord and Ruler, — that all the gifts of the world are His gifts, — that they have a real worth only as coming from Him, — and that the firstfruits of them are ever due, as marks of gratitude, to the Giver. Moreover the Jewish sacrifices were confessions of sin, acknowledgements that man is not what he ought to be,—acknowledgements that there is an archetypal humanity to which man ought to attain, but does not, — acknowledgements that there is a rightful and righteous

Judge, to whom he is accountable for his transgressions, whose wrath he has to deprecate, whose forgiveness to implore. But here again the world overcame Faith, even as it did also in the case of the Law. It overcame Faith, when it wrested the Law from Faith, — when it hid the spiritual meaning of the Law, and crusted it over with carnality, — when it choked and stifled the spirit with the letter, — when it persuaded men to keep the letter for selfish carnal ends. And so, whenever the works of the Law are wrought otherwise than from a living principle of Faith, — whenever the works themselves are accounted good and held to have any value, — whenever they are made subservient to any earthly selfish purpose, to man's glory or interest, — the weakness of Faith is laid bare, and the world triumphs over it. Indeed the very necessity for a law results from the weakness of our Faith. Were we strong in Faith, our hearts and minds would ever be fixt on the principles of right and duty; we should walk in their light, and see everything by that light, without being drawn astray by the temptations and delusions of the world. Only because we are so apt to lose sight of the heavenly lodestars, do we need earthly guideposts: and one of the saddest and most humiliating victories of the world over Faith is to persuade us that the use of these guideposts is to lead us, not to a heavenly, but to an earthly city. In like manner the spiritual significance and purpose of the sacrifices were forgotten. They were regarded as having an efficacy in themselves to propitiate God. Thus they were turned into engines of superstition, that is, of Faith crouching and writhing under the weight of the world. So utterly had men's feelings and perceptions been perverted, they deemed the one thing desirable

to be, that they might wallow in sin with impunity: they lookt upon God with fear, because He would draw them away from sin: they besought Him to let them continue in sin; and they fancied that the blood of bulls and of goats might bribe Him to do so. As they themselves had been deluded and blinded by the shows of the world, they thought that God also might in like manner be deluded and blinded. *Wherefore, when the Onlybegotten Son cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not; in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come, to do Thy will, O God.* Whatsoever does not spring freshly and livingly from Faith, cannot be wellpleasing in the eyes of God. This carnalmindedness, which is fain to deck itself out with the shells of dead works, was so common among the later Jews, that it has been deemed the distinguishing feature of the Judaizing spirit. Yet, alas! it has not been confined to the Jews: it has shewn itself in all ages of the Christian Church: and its tokens have been of the same kind, an excessive attachment to certain outward forms, to ordinances, to ceremonies, a proneness to believe that these are the things of paramount importance, that these are the chief instruments of salvation, and that there can be no salvation without them. For in the Christian Church as well as in the Jewish, we are taught by numberless examples, that Faith, when it is not pure, does not overcome, but is overcome by the world.

To the early Jewish Church God spoke by means of types. By types He foreshewed the atonement which was one day to be accomplisht. In this, as in all things, the plan of His providence has been adapted to the wants and capacities of man. During the youth of a nation, as dur-

ing that of individuals, the sign and the thing signified are more readily regarded as one and the same. But with the progress of years the dividing analysing Understanding becomes stronger. The notion gains ground, that the sign is a mere sign; as indeed it must be, when severed from the quickening power of Faith. Some still cling to it, though without believing it to be more: others reject it. In such a state of feeling it is requisite to speak more distinctly to the intellect by words, the great bond and only clear medium of intelligent intercourse and communion. This was the work for which the prophets were sent. As the Law had foreshewn the atonement by types, the prophets declared it by words. In them we find the consummation of the Jewish religion, — a consummation which was the close of the first, and preparation of the second covenant, — the more distinct and definite announcement of Him who was to overcome the world, not for Himself merely, but for all such as will believe in Him; — of Him, through whom the Faith, hitherto confined to Judea, was to be spread over the world, who was to have the heathen for His inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for His possession; — of Him, who was to sit down at God's right hand, until all mankind were brought to acknowledge Him, and all His enemies were made His footstool; — of Him, who came to do the will of God with His whole heart, and Faith in whom will alone give men a whole heart, will alone enable them to do the will of God; — of Him, in the day of whose power His people were to be willing, and to spring forth in the beauty of holiness, like dew from the womb of the morning. This was the Faith the prophets were commissioned to proclaim to the Jews, a Faith which was to be an assurance of things hoped for: but this Faith

also was overcome by the world. That which was spiritual in the prophecy, was corrupted by carnal interpretations. Instead of looking forward with yearning to the coming of a spiritual Deliverer, of a spiritual King, the hope and desire of the Jews was a temporal Deliverer, a temporal King. Instead of rejoicing that they were God's chosen instrument for freeing all nations from the bondage of ignorance and sin, they were content, and even wisht, that the nations should remain in that bondage, if they might but themselves sit down at God's right hand, and make all their enemies their footstool. Thus they in great measure forestalled that carnal misconception of the nature of Christ's kingdom, which in after ages became so prevalent in Christendom, and through which Rome claimed to be the spiritual, as she had been the temporal mistress of the world.

Hence we see that the revelation made to the Jews was incomplete; and so it was seldom adequate to produce anything like a Faith which will overcome the world. The victories gained beneath it were mostly outward and partial. Outward enemies might be conquered; but the far more formidable ones within the heart were still strong, and seemingly invincible. The revelation was incomplete, both in what it made known concerning God's relation to man, and concerning man's relation to God. It did not shew how a God of holiness could look with favour on a sinful world. It did not shew how a frail creature could render a service acceptable to God. These were man's two great wants. He knew them not indeed: still less did he know how they were to be removed: but in proportion as he was taught to discern more of God, and of himself, the more did he become conscious of his bondage to the world; the more strongly did he feel that he had not that assurance of

invisible things, which would overcome the world. The revelation which was completed on the day of Pentecost first taught us plainly what we wanted, at the same time that it fulfilled all our wants. We wanted the knowledge of a Saviour: we wanted His atonement, His intercession. We wanted the indwelling presence of the purifying strengthening Spirit. We wanted Christ, both as Jesus, and as Emmanuel. This is the mystery which was hidden from the beginning, the mystery which so many prophets and sages desired to see into, and could not. And this mystery was made manifest, when the Son of God took our nature upon Him, to shew us how we ought to overcome the world, and to endow us with that Faith which should enable us to overcome it.

SERMON VI.

FAITH IN CHRIST, THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD.

1 John v. 5.
Who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Hitherto we have been speaking of partial imperfect forms of Faith, of forms under which it has seldom been able to accomplish anything like its great work of giving man the victory over the world. And this its weakness and imperfection has clearly been owing in great measure to the incompleteness and insufficiency of its Object, which had not such a constraining power as could set man at one with himself, or make him feel himself at one with God. The perfect supreme harmony, the inseparable indivisible unity of Faith, working by love, and shewing itself by a life of obedience, is only to be found in Christianity. Wherefore the Apostle, after having declared that *Faith is the victory which overcometh the world*, adds, *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* This is a glorious subject, a subject of the deepest interest and widest importance, and would furnish ample matter for a whole course of sermons. For what does it embrace? the whole Object of Christian Faith, the whole substance of Christian Duty,

in their union and unity. All however that it will be possible for me to do, is to call your attention to some of the peculiarities, whereby Faith in Christ is distinguisht from all other Faith, so that the very name of Faith has in a manner been specially appropriated to it, and whereby it is enabled to effect, what no other Faith can, its great work of overcoming the world.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? That none else can, is plain and certain. All other Faith is overcome by the world. The office of Faith, we have seen, is to raise our hearts from visible things to invisible, from the objects of the present moment to the hopes held out by the future. Its great end is to deliver us from the bondage of sense and the senses, of self and selfishness, and to make us live spiritually, in the spirit and by the spirit, for spiritual objects, and with spiritual aims, — to enable us to discern the hand of God in all things, so that we may live with a wakeful consciousness that we are ever in the presence of God,—that we may as children live under the eye of a loving Father, reverencing him with holy fear, fearing to disobey him, fearing to displease him, fearing to do wrong in his sight, assured of his love, and therefore loving him, and anxious to shew forth that love in all things, looking to him for counsel, for aid, trusting him undoubtingly in every time of need. This is the great work which Faith is designed to accomplish, to restore man to the presence of God, which he lost at the Fall. This is the true victory whereby it is to overcome the world, — whereby it is to overcome everything in the world that would lure or drive us away from God, — whereby it is to draw aside the bright gaudy curtain which the world stretches out before

us, and to open our eyes to behold the living God sitting on His eternal throne above it. This is the great and glorious work of Faith: but this work in the natural man it is utterly unable to bring to pass. It is utterly unable to do anything of the kind, anything at all approaching to this. So long as its operation is bounded to the outward world, — so long as its sole aim is to make us prefer a remote worldly object to a near one, — so long therefore as, instead of battling against the world, and striving to overcome it and to cast off its yoke altogether, it merely labours to raise the world out of its rude barbarian nakedness, and to invest it with the gorgeous clothing of thought, to stamp it with the image of its human lord, — so long Faith has great power. But when its purpose is to disenthrall the spiritual affections from the bondage of the carnal affections, or to give reality to the ideas of the Reason, and authority to the voice of the Conscience, and to set up Duty in its rightful soverainty over mankind, it is powerless, — as powerless as the vital spirit in a plant is to unfold a cankered blossom.

Nor is it less impotent to pierce through that thick dark veil, which the visible universe has spread before the face of God, ever since man gave himself up to the worship of the creature. Sooner might it lift off the crust of the earth, and lay bare the seething throes of the elementary furnace beneath. Philosophy may indeed evolve a certain idea of God: but her God, so far as he is merely hers, has no power over the heart, none over the will. He is made up of negations. Therefore, as we cannot conceive any action, except where there is some cognateness between the agent and that which is acted upon, he may well be placed, as he was by the Epicureans, in absolute apathy and

indifference. It is only for *the living God* that the soul can *thirst*, that *the heart and flesh cry out*. Even among the heathens, it was only when incarnate in the attributes of humanity, that the divine idea exercised any sway over their lives. At the same time it is plain that there can be no strong Faith in polytheism. The light, which is to make the earth bring forth her fruits, must be concentrated in the sun, not split and scattered among the stars. Besides all polytheism rests on a ground of pantheism, which is the speculative consummation of the victory of the world over Faith. Nor can there be a strong Faith in a mythological religion. Faith abhors fictions: it feeds and thrives solely on truth. Superstition will indeed embrace fictions: in fact this is its essential character, that it substitutes fictions for truth. But Superstition is slavish, the slave of the world and of the senses; whereas Faith is free, being made free by the truth. Being the atoning principle in the mind, it is marred when the faculties jar against each other: but when the imagination is allowed free play, to adorn the objects of popular worship, it will infallibly invent much, that the reason and conscience will reject. Here therefore that want of stability will betray itself, which is ever the characteristic of the doubleminded. On the other hand, when it pleased God to reveal Himself by outward manifestations of His power and guardian care, and to declare His Will outwardly by express positive ordinances on the stone tables of the Law, although this revelation produced admirable examples of a dauntless unwavering trust in God, still Faith, even where it was strongest, seldom wrought its rightful effect of hallowing the life and conduct. The declarations of God's Will, which it received the most readily, were those which best admitted of being brought

into alliance with man's proud and loveless nature. And as the revelation itself had been outward, so there was ever a strong tendency under it to rest in the outward act, and to regard that as the only thing needful or important. Thus, while the carcase of heathenism was rotting under the combined action of scepticism and voluptuousness, the glory of Judaism had departed, and the Law was ossified into lifeless formalities.

Such was the miserable helplessness of Faith,—crawling like a worm along the ground, unable to lift itself up, and already bruised and maimed by the tread of Sin, which seemed on the point of utterly extinguishing it,—when God vouchsafed to manifest all the riches of His grace to mankind in Christ Jesus. Down to that time Faith had seldom been successful, except when employed in decorating and emblazoning the chariot of the prince of this world, or when sent before him to prepare a way for his conquests. But as to stopping and driving back his chariot,—a child might as well stretch out its hand to drive back a rushing whirlwind. Moreover, as the departure of the spirit is ever rapidly followed by the dissolution of the body, Faith, having wholly lost the power of raising man's soul to anything above him, was also losing its power as the uniting organizing principle of human society. What then was the way which God took to strengthen Faith, so that it might indeed enable man to overcome the world? Did He come with some mighty outward manifestation of His omnipotence, riding upon the cherubim, and flying upon the wings of the wind? Did He lay bare the skeleton of nature, to shew man the idol he trusted in, shaking the earth, and shivering its cities, and sweeping the sea over the heads of the mountains? Or

did He set up some huge monument, some centuple pyramid, or tower in which Babel would have been a petty chamber, in order that pilgrims from all the ends of the earth should flock, generation after generation, to behold and be convinced by this demonstration of a power so greatly surpassing that of man; as we may imagine that the inhabitants of the remoter side of the moon must needs be evermore traveling to gaze on the vast orb of the earth? Or did He establish a kingdom, which should cast the chains of its dominion round the globe, and by which all the empires of the world should be swallowed up, as the serpents that sprang from the rods of the magicians were swallowed up by the mightier serpent from the rod of Aaron? Yet this was the very disease of the world, that it would only perceive, that it would only believe in, that it would only trust in, that it would only worship the outward and visible. And was this disease to be cured by a revelation, the glory of which should itself be outward and visible? He who has read history aright knows that terrific visitations and desolating calamities, though they may strengthen Faith in those in whom it is already strong, only foster superstition where Faith is weak, and render unbelief still more reckless. They who will not believe in God, ascribe His works to Beelzebub. *Let us eat and drink*, is the cry of those who merely know that tomorrow they die. Or, if the wonders of the universe, the permanent and the ever-varying ones, the wonders of light and motion and life, did not sufficiently bespeak a living Maker and Governor, was this to be done by any dead mass? On the other hand, what the effect of a temporal kingdom would have been, we are taught by seeing how Faith grew faint and failed, when the Church forgot its spiritual destination, and attempted

to erect a universal monarchy. Should one lesson be insufficient, another is afforded by the sensual debasement which has everywhere followed the sword of the false prophet of Arabia. Constant experience proves that no wonders can convince those whose hearts are proof against the higher spiritual evidences of truth; that they who hear not Moses and the prophets, will not be persuaded though one should rise from the dead.

How then did the Lord of heaven and earth manifest Himself to a race so loth to believe in anything except what appealed to their senses? How did He call mankind from the slavery of sense to the free obedience of Faith? Again the Lord came not in the strong wind. The Lord came not in the earthquake. The Lord came not in the fire. A babe was born at Bethlehem, was laid in a manger; and shepherds were called to look thereon. In this manner did the King of kings bow the heavens and come down to overcome the world. This was the pomp of His coming, this His army, this His retinue. This was His first lesson to all such as were to believe in Him, admonishing them how they were to overcome the world. And as His birth was, such was His life. Poor, lowly, destitute, forsaken, reviled, persecuted, homeless, driven from place to place, an object of scorn and hatred, mockt, scourged, crucified, an outcast from the world, put to death by the world, — how did He overcome the world? By patience, by meekness, by longsuffering, by purity, by holiness, by perseverance in welldoing, notwithstanding all that the world could do to hinder and deter Him, — by unweariableness in all the offices of love toward His enemies no less than His friends. Then did the powers of hell tremble on their seat amid the rolling sea of everlasting

darkness, when the Spirit of God, descending upon Him who had shewn His purpose to fulfill all righteousness, declared Him to be the beloved Son, in whom the Father was well pleased. Then were the gates of brass broken, and the bars of iron cut in sunder, to let out those whom the world held in the bondage of its lusts and passions, when the voice of Him who died on the Cross was heard beseeching His Father to forgive His murderers; for that they knew not what they did.

Many, brethren, and mighty are the aids whereby the believer in Christ is assisted and encouraged to overcome the world. One main ground of the weakness of Faith, we have seen, had always been our inadequate knowledge of its great Object. Without Christ, we know little of God in His true relation to man; we have but an imperfect knowledge of man, especially in his relation to God; we can frame no conception of a possibility that God and man should be at one. For the heroes and demigods of the heathens had always their full share in the evil of man's nature; and their superiority was rather physical than moral. But Christ, as perfect God, shews us what God is; as perfect man, shews us what man ought to be; as at once perfect God and perfect man, shews us how God and man may be at one. Something indeed of God had been made manifest from the beginning, and was spread out before the eyes of mankind by a constant ineffaceable revelation, which day told to day, and night uttered to night, — even His eternal power and divinity, His power, and the wisdom and goodness displayed in the order and harmony of the universe (AA). But from these manifestations, which ought to have been plain and convincing to a being endowed with a reasonable understanding, man

turned away, and ascribed the power and the beneficence to the created things themselves, and lookt upon them as their own lords and rulers, yea, and as his also, as the lords and rulers of his heart and soul: and so he said, *There are gods many, and lords many.* Even in the manifestation of Himself made on mount Sinai, in the Law, God only permitted Moses to behold the back parts of His eternal Will. He still did not let His face be seen. The spirit was indeed latent in the Law; but the Law was outward, as every positive law must be. The perfect manifestation was reserved for the time when all the fulness of the Godhead was to dwell bodily on earth in the man Christ Jesus; for the time when the Word, which was God from the beginning, was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. This then is one great victory, whereby he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God, overcomes the world. He sees God, whom the world would hide from him; and the phantoms and spectres of the world vanish before the light of the Eternal Father.

So again from Christ's allperfect example, — from His purity, from His holiness, from His patience, from His meekness, from His gentleness, from His unswerving resolution not to resist evil, but to overcome evil by good, from His unceasing diligence in doing His heavenly Father's will, from His unremitting activity in every ministration of love to the whole race whose nature He had taken upon Himself, even to the most unworthy, even to His bitterest enemies, — from this glorious pattern of that Love which suffereth long and is kind, which vaunteth not itself, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil,

rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth, — from this great exemplar of what man ought to be, we may learn through Faith, and through the aid of the Spirit shewing us the things of Christ, to gain a victory over the world, and over our own carnal hearts, the worst, and to us far the deadliest and most unconquerable part of the world. Fain would they beguile us into believing that we may be content to be, nay, that we ought to be, something very different from this. They would beguile us into believing that, as we have fleshly appetites, we may indulge those fleshly appetites: and here as ever the serpent understanding is ready with its sophistries, to persuade us that the only restraint we need impose on ourselves, is that markt out by nature, when it made excess injurious. They would beguile us into believing that our own gratification, our own exaltation, our own glory, the taking care of ourselves, the raising ourselves to eminence, are rightly the main business and purpose of our lives. They would beguile us into believing that we are to fall down and worship the image of honour and dignity which the world has set up; that, if we are reviled, we are to revile again; that, if we are smitten, we are to smite again, blow for blow, and wound for wound, taking care that our retaliation be at least not lighter than the offense. They would lead us to interpret St Paul's exhortation, not according to the life-giving spirit, but according to the killing letter, — to heap coals of fire on our enemy's head, not for the sake of melting his wrath and kindling his love, but of consuming him. They would make us strive to overcome evil by evil, in doing which, as the Apostle's words warn us, we should ourselves be overcome by evil: whereas, whenever we strive

to overcome evil with good, we are performing our part in that great work of Faith, which is to overcome all the evil in the world.

The features of this picture, when seen by the all-revealing light of Christianity, do indeed look hideous and revolting. Yet they are not taken from the worst side of human nature, from that which is acknowledgedly and wilfully sinful. They are representations of that which the natural man does not condemn, but rather approves, — of that which custom and the opinion of the world have generally sanctioned, — of that which persons usurping the name of philosophers have pronounced to be right and fitting. And though man, without the light of Christianity, may attain to a much purer and nobler conception of duty, he will hardly perceive, without that light, how the vulgar notions just mentioned are not merely at variance with, but in direct opposition to the truth, and how the fundamental principle, to which everything is referred, and by which everything is estimated in them, is in fact the one main principle and source of evil in the world. Now what must ensue from the beholding of our nature, of what we ought to be, in the spotless mirror of the perfect man Christ Jesus? what but a conviction of the utter corruption and depravity of our nature, of our total estrangement from all holiness and godliness, — of a corruption not confined to our outward actions, not to be eradicated or healed by any amendment of conduct, but spreading through every pore of the heart, and poisoning the very lifeblood of the will, of which self-pleasing, self-indulgence, self-exaltation, self-idolatry, under one form or other, are the main actuating spring and motive? In the perfect God, Christ Jesus, we see what God is. In the perfect Man, Christ Jesus, we

see what man ought to be. In the perfect God and perfect Man, Christ Jesus, we see how the holiness of God may be in entire union and unity with the godliness of man. In Him we see how the world may indeed be overcome, how the kingdom of heaven may descend upon earth, and how the throne of God may be establisht within it. But when we look at ourselves, what do we see? except how we have been overcome by the world, overcome by it in all manner of ways, — overcome by its charms, overcome by its bribes, overcome by its lusts, overcome by its darkness, overcome by its glare, overcome by its flattery, overcome by its scorn, overcome by its terrours, — how we have been fettered and manacled and bound to its car, — nay, how we have rusht forward of our own accord, and cast ourselves under its thundering wheels, and have bid them roll over our souls, and have even deemed we were rejoicing, when writhing beneath them. Thus, on being taught to discern the true relation between man and the world, do we discover that we have been shamefully overcome by it. And how and why have we been thus overcome? Through our want of Faith: through our want of Faith in that which is invisible, and our giving up our hearts to visible things: through our want of Faith in the future, and our prostration before the present: through our want of Faith in reason, in conscience, in hope, in love, and our persuasion that material, palpable, sensual pleasures, — pleasures that we can see with our eyes, and grasp with our hands, and taste with our palates,—pleasures that pamper our carnal hearts, and flatter our selfwill, and magnify us in our own estimation, — are the only true realities. And as it is through our want of Faith, that we have been overcome by the

world, so through Faith alone can we rise out of this disastrous defeat, and overcome that whereby we have hitherto been overcome; through Faith in Him who is invisible, — through Faith in that heavenly peace and joy which await all such as endeavour through Faith to attain to them, — through Faith in Reason and its laws, — through Faith in Conscience, as the voice of God, — through Faith in the blessed hopes that have been set before us,—through Faith in the beauty of holiness, — through Faith, as the ground of that Love, which, after the example of Christ, will also believe all things, and hope all things, and endure all things, and never fail. This Faith God has graciously vouchsafed to strengthen, by manifesting that grace, which before had been hidden, in the person of His Onlybegotten Son, and by shewing us in Him how man ought to live, in order to feel all the atoning power of Faith, in order to find peace in himself and favour with God.

But here the world, as it had hitherto drawn us away from God by its deceitful lures, now tries to scare us from Him. It lifts up its voice within us, and cries, *In vain dost thou behold the holiness and lovingkindness of God. In vain dost thou perceive what a noble being thou thyself oughtest to be, thou whom God made a little lower than the angels, and whom He crowned with glory and worship. Hadst thou kept thy first estate, then indeed this sight would have been a pure joy to thee. I myself rejoiced and was glad, when God first sent me forth on my course through the heavens, when the morningstars sang the hymn of the creation, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. But when thou by thy sin madest me a partaker in thy curse, then was I turned away from God; then I hid, what before I manifested; and from that time forth I have made thee my slave, who wert placed upon me to*

be my master. I have worn thee out in beautifying and enriching my face. I have forced thee to give up thy heart and soul, and all thy heavenly hopes and aspirations, for such poor scantlings of wages as I might deign to dole out to thee. But though I treat thee thus, thou canst not escape from me. Thou art bound to me by thy weakness, through which thou canst not lift thyself above me. Thou art bound to me by thy passions and appetites, which have overrun thy soul, and which sprout up so thickly within thee, that thou canst never root them out, and clear thyself from them. Above all, thou art bound to me by thy sins, which have made thee an outcast from God, which render thee an abomination in His sight, and not one of which thou canst ever wipe out. Vex not thyself therefore with thoughts about heavenly things, which can never profit thee, which can only deepen thy anguish by the vision of what thou hast lost, of the love thou hast outraged and forfeited. Abide contentedly with me, feeding on the husks of those pleasures wherewith I won thy soul, until I gather thee to thy fathers, and swallow thee up. Eat, drink; for to-morrow thou shalt die.

This struggle between the feeling of sinfulness, of helplessness, and of condemnation, on the one hand, and the desire awakened on the other hand to fulfill the demands of duty, and to realize the idea of humanity, in such a manner as to find favour in the sight of God, — the same struggle of which St Paul gives so awful a representation in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, — is what oppresses a man, and almost crushes him, when his eyes are opened to behold the glory of the godhead, and of the perfect manhood in Christ, and turn, with the light derived from thence, to look into the abyss of sin within him. St Paul's representation is indeed that of a man

under the Law, whereby we have the knowledge of sin: but it implies the far deeper consciousness inspired by the Gospel, whereby sin has become yet more exceeding sinful. It represents the condition of a man who has the light of the Gospel, without any feeling of its comfort. Many are the forms which this struggle takes, many the sophisms wherewith the enemy would deceive us, according to the character of the heart on which the assault is to be made. But none can ever have attained to a deep living personal knowledge of Christ, to a deep living personal conviction of the blessing of being reconciled to God, without passing in one way or other through this firy baptism, and being brought to acknowledge their natural estrangement from God; although to many this crisis may be greatly tempered by the effect of God's grace, working gradually, and without any violent check, on their souls. Many may never have departed so far from Christ, as to feel any strong revulsion when they give themselves up to Him altogether. Very many however are there, who, as in the Eastern tale, — if I may be allowed to take an apt image, which has been applied somewhat similarly by a German poet, — find all the nails and bars and holdfasts of the vessel in which they have hitherto been sailing securely along, all the maxims and rules of their former experience, all their aims and purposes and desires, start suddenly out of their places, as they approach the magnetic mountain, — and who, although they reach it, do so only after battling nakedly against the waves, with peril of their lives. Now in this last dread conflict which we have to go through, before the world will loosen its hold on our souls, there is no help for us, there is no strength for us, except in Faith. The more we strive after

purity, the more we become conscious of our impurity. The more earnest our efforts grow, the more hopeless must they be, unless they are supported by Faith, — by Faith in the perfect righteousness of Christ, and in His gracious purpose to bestow that righteousness on all such as believe in Him. This is the consolation which gleams upon St Paul, after his wandering through that dark labyrinth, where the vision of right and duty seemed only to repell man. This is his comfort after that exclamation of despairing anguish, sent up as it were from the heart of mankind, — *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* On earth there is no deliverance: in man there is no help. But there is a deliverance: and for this he thanks God through Jesus Christ our Lord. For there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, walking not after the flesh, but, by Faith, after the spirit.

This is the great decisive work of Faith in our spiritual life. When our sense of our own utter helplessness is thoroughly awakened, when we are bowed down by fear and shame, by a feeling of reprobateness and condemnation, then Faith beholds the gracious love of God offering us forgiveness for the sake of the perfect righteousness of His Son, — offering to clothe us with that righteousness, that we too may be righteous as He was, if we will but strive to tear off that clinging robe of sin, which we have hitherto been girding fold after fold around our souls, and endeavour to put on the righteousness of Christ. Faith beholds this, and embraces the offer thankfully, joyfully, with prayer and praise, casting away all selfreliance, all trust in human works, trusting solely, living wholly, in the perfect righteousness of Christ. The soul feels that it has

no longer any need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God lightens it; and the Lamb is its light. Thus, in this most terrible of all the struggles that man has to go through, Faith, and Faith alone, enables him to overcome the world.

After this critical victory has been gained, the rest of our warfare, though our life on earth must still ever be a warfare, is comparatively easy. We must still indeed live by Faith: we must stand by Faith: we must hold up the shield of Faith against the firy darts of sin. Faith, which in man's earthly life we were led to regard as the sword wherewith he is to conquer, in his spiritual life, as the Apostle teaches us, is rather his shield. For in his spiritual life his main business is to stand on the defensive, to guard himself from evil by Faith, so that the Spirit of God may work freely in him, and that he may not be hindered in fulfilling God's purpose with the sword of the Spirit. They however who fight against evil after such a conflict, fight with the feeling that they have already been conquerors, with the feeling that God is for them, that Christ has justified them. *Who*, they are enabled to say, *shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor highth, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Who is he that overcometh the world? Even he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God. In the first ages of the Church, the very act of believing this implied a great

victory over the world. It implied a victory over the carnal understanding, and over the carnal heart. It implied that he who so believed was not ashamed of that Cross, which was a stumblingblock to the Jew, and foolishness to the Greek. It implied that he had discerned the mystery of the kingdom of heaven, that he had lookt through the mask of the world, and seen the eternal realities behind it. And as the profession of such a belief was encompast by danger and scandal, — as it compelled men to burst the bonds of habit, and often those of family and friendship and companionship, — as it always required a sacrifice of inveterate prejudices and prepossessions, mostly of worldly advantages, and not seldom of the strongest affections, — the very profession, thus proving the sincerity of the belief, was so far a victory over the world. At present on the other hand such a profession, unless followed up by earnest consistency of conduct, — unless we really take up that Cross, which was stampt on our forehead in our infancy, — is attended by no danger or shame or difficulty, is in most cases the natural result of outward circumstances, and so can afford no proof in itself that the belief profest is truly rooted in the heart. A slight movement against the stream indicates some sort of energy; whereas with the stream even things without life float along. But are there no difficulties in the way of a belief in Christ as the Son of God, which still render such a belief a victory over the world? Surely, if of old the fetters of habit and custom withheld men from believing in Christ, so do they now. For Custom does not merely resist what is opposed to it, but undermines what rests upon it. Great as is the power of Habit, its power is that of making us act mechanically, rather than with a lively consciousness of what we are

doing. Thus it is the direct antagonist to Faith. Every one must have experienced how the strongest impressions lose their force after a while, unless they are met by some responsive activity, by means of which an inward principle may be substituted for the decay of the outward stimulant; unless the spiritual man be constantly alert to keep off the drowsiness which creeps over the natural man, no less when basking in the sun, than when chilled by the frost. This is a part of our slavery to the world. The soil is soon worn out by a repetition of the same crops: and hardly anything is more difficult than to reinfuse life into words and notions, which have long lain dead on the surface of our souls.

Still too, as of yore, the incarnation of the Son of God, the manifestation of God in the flesh, the reconciliation of man to God by the self abasement of the eternal Word, is foolishness to the Greek. These truths are foolishness to those who worship the formal laws of the Understanding, and who are held in bondage thereby, so as to deny the very possibility of that, which, standing above those laws, seems to trample upon them. They are foolishness to those who hold that there can be no truth, except what can be ground or spun out of the materials supplied by the senses. They are foolishness to those whose hearts and consciences do not in some measure bear witness to them, to those who, feeling no need of them, cannot recognize their necessity. As in all knowledge we must believe, before we can understand, so must it be most especially in that knowledge, the very first germs and rudiments of which lie altogether in Faith. And as it is solely by a diligent and faithful study of the revelations of the natural world, that we can discover the laws of nature, so is a

like diligent and believing study of the revelations of the spiritual world the only means whereby any truths pertaining to it can be discerned.

Moreover the palaces and theatres erected by human knowledge have become so vast and gorgeous, that we in our days may perhaps have stronger temptations to abide contentedly therein, instead of going forth to build and to people the house of God. While the universe has been continually expanding before the advances of Science, men have been apt to fancy that it had outgrown God, because it had outgrown their conception of Him. When they have discovered some new province of His empire, as there was no place markt out for it in their previous system of things, they have thought it must belong to some unknown God: whereupon some have anticipated in reckless indifference, others in faithless dismay, that this unknown God must dethrone the God they had hitherto worshipt. In wandering and wondering over the immensity of the circumference, we have often forgotten that it must have a centre: and the Creation has still concealed the Creator, all the more because man deemed that he saw an image of himself in it, the work of his own hands, the reflexion of his own mind, and did not recollect of what mind his was the image, did not perceive how this very spectacle, which so dazzled and delighted him, bore testimony to its being so. Yet it is most certain, that the immeasurable superiority of modern Europe in science, as well as in other respects, to the rest of the world is owing wholly to the influence of Christianity. Indeed physical science, as has been justly remarkt, has been almost confined to Christendom (AB). For this there are many reasons. Christianity has given man an assurance of the

unity and intelligent purpose pervading all the operations of Nature, an assurance which accompanies him as an unseen friend and guide in all his speculations. It delivers him from the bondage of Nature, from the thraldom both of the senses and of the fancy, and has thus elevated him above materialism, into which he would soon fall headlong, were he to lose its sustaining power. It enables him likewise to feel something like a fraternal sympathy and communion with Nature, a reverence for the work of the allwise and benevolent Author of his own being, a reverence equally removed from voluptuous idolatry and from superstitious fear. We know, that all the gifts of the natural world are the gifts of God, that the beauty of the natural world is the visible expression of His wisdom and goodness, that the laws of the natural world are His laws, and, as proceeding from Him, universal and unchangeable, until He shall will to change them. We have a feeling too that the natural world is in some measure a sharer in our Fall, and that it is waiting for the time when, along with its lord, it shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. To the influence, often perhaps the latent influence, of these thoughts and feelings, do we owe that deeper more spiritual love of Nature, which distinguishes Christian poetry and art. In science likewise it is the truth that has made us free; and the benefits of this freedom have been extended in some measure even to such as have rejected the truth whereby it had been obtained. For, like all God's gifts, this too has not always been rightly used and duly acknowledged. Though Christian wisdom is the great parent of natural science, it by no means follows that all men of science must have been Christians. Here again the weakness of man's Faith, his proneness to

idolatry has shewn itself. He has evermore given up his heart and soul to that to which he had devoted his mind. He has fallen down and worshipt the laws, which he himself had found out. Yet, as it is through the operation of Christianity that even they who may reject it have been enabled to attain to whatever eminence they may have reacht in science; so is it the unseen unfelt influence of Christianity, that preserves them from gross materialism. Indeed manifold symptoms have shewn themselves during the last hundred years, in the more intelligent nations of Europe, betokening how easily and inevitably, if we were to abandon our Faith in Christ, all that is good and wholesome and precious in the present condition of society would be swallowed up in the desolating licentiousness of a pantheistic atheism.

Thus even in the progress of science we find evidence that Christian Faith is the victory which overcometh the world, and that without this Faith the mind as well as the heart of man would have been wholly overcome by the world. In like manner, if we cast our thoughts over that vast mass of events which is presented to us by the history of mankind, we shall perceive that Christianity alone has brought anything like order and unity into that mass; that it gives a meaning and purpose to what would otherwise be a mere chaos; that through it alone can we understand even what the heathens were unconsciously and blindly striving after. In a former sermon, when considering the power of Faith as exemplified in man's natural life, we found that Faith is the main spring of everything done by man according to his humanity; that it is the ground of all social union; that by it his affections are ennobled into duties; and that through it his duties acquire a

living power over his soul. In that discussion it was assumed, with reference to our immediate purpose, that the objects of Faith are ideas or ideals; such being the highest objects of contemplation attainable by man, independently of revelation. And we were led to the conclusion, that the deplorable inefficiency of Faith was owing in no slight measure to the insufficiency of those ideas or ideals. They are too vague and indistinct. They require too arduous an exercise of thought in him who is to bring them clearly before his mind. Hence by the bulk of mankind they are indiscernible, except through a faint tradition: and they whose minds are capable of such speculations, and who devote themselves thereto, are apt to forget that there is any necessary connexion between the region of thought and that of action. In a word, the great want was that of living objective reality. It was supposed that these ideas and ideals were mere fictions of the mind; that the only thing feasible, and therefore to be aimed at, was to approximate to them; and that at the very best no reality can resemble them more nearly than a globe resembles a star. But in Christianity all these ideas are realized, and are set before us, and brought home to our hearts, in forms far more glorious and perfect, than it had ever entered into the mind of man to conceive. Thus here again we find that Christianity does not destroy man's nature, but fulfill it.

For instance, the idea of a father has ever been one of the most sacred, one of the most powerful over the spirits of men. Among all nations has it been so. It is graven on our hearts in our infancy. Numberless acts of love, the daily support and nurture of our life, bodily and spiritual, habit, custom, authority, law, deepen and brighten the

impression year after year. Yet how far is any living reality from answering to it! How often do the shows of the world jar against it, and almost seem to mock at it! That this has been deeply felt, we see in poetry, which gives utterance to the universal feelings of mankind, and in all forms of which the representation of children struggling against the will of their parents has been a favorite theme, the more so on account of the moral conflict which such a struggle involves. Nay, our Lord Himself declares that He was come to set the son against the father. With what new power therefore, and glory, and sanctity, was the name invested, when we were commanded to address God Himself as Our Father! when *He sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!* In like manner, how was the filial relation hallowed, when we were taught to discern a mysterious analogy to it in God Himself! when in Him we beheld a Father, in Him an Eternal Son. And how are the duties of this relation enforced upon us, when we are told that the Eternal Son Himself learnt obedience by the things that He suffered,—yea, that, when He was fulfilling all righteousness upon earth, He was subject to His earthly parents! Again, what a swarm of passions, starting out of every foul corner of the heart, have in all ages disfigured and distorted and debased the conjugal relation! How, on the other hand, is that relation glorified and sanctified, when we are exhorted to regard it as an image and likeness of that between Christ and the Church! when we are thus taught to discern that the essence and consummation of love is self-sacrifice for the purification of its object; and thus likewise are enabled to see what true devotion is, in her who is nothing except in her union with her Lord, and whose

highest aim is to receive His image into her heart. Great and noble too as is the feeling of patriotism, great and noble as is the idea of Country, the taint of earth still cleaves to it. In whatever form of government that idea may be embodied, there is often a struggle between conflicting principles, between law and right. We have to do, and even to love, what we cannot approve. And as a strong light will be bordered by a dark shadow, so, where there is such a host of contending interests and passions, an ardent lover of his country is mostly a jealous enemy of her neighbours. But in that holy community which Christ establisht, all exclusive invidious feeling was to pass away. In His Church there was to be neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian nor Scythian: but all were to be gathered together in Him, as members of His body, and every one members one of another.

It will not be requisite for me to pursue this train of thought through the various branches of duty, for the sake of shewing how every duty was exemplified by our Lord in its highest excellence. Such contemplations must be familiar to you all. They are for ever brought before you in one shape or other; it being one of the chief arguments of Christian preaching, to shew how whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, — all these things were realized in the life of Christ, for the building up of the creature into the perfect image of God. In Him alone we see how the manifold rays of duty are one in the pure light of Love, their diversity arising from the difference of the objects on which that Love shines. In Him we see

how Love is infinite fulness, so that the world itself could not contain the record of its manifestations.

One exception indeed may be urged, with reference to that very virtue which we have been considering through the course of these sermons. Our Lord, it may be said, has not set us an example of Faith. This however is only true, so far as a state of imperfection is the necessary condition of Faith, only so far as Faith is essentially incompatible with that divine intuition which belonged to Christ as God. So far as Christ was a man, His whole life was a life of Faith. As the Son of Man, He alone lived, as every child of man ought to live, wholly by Faith, by Faith in God, shewing forth the inexhaustible riches of His Faith toward his human brethren, coming to them again and again with every demonstration of power and love, if so be He might awaken the better spirit which was slumbering in them, oppressed by the weight of sin, and might rouse them out of the sleep of death, — undeterred by the ghastly apparitions of evil, which met Him whithersoever He turned His eyes, — persevering unto the end for the joy set before Him of gathering His redeemed from all the quarters of the world. That which He did through divine intuition, we can only do through Faith. In Him, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, we have not only the ground for a full lively undoubting Faith in God, but also the strongest motive and encouragement for an active Faith in our brethren. As no aspect of evil could daunt Him, or make Him despond, none should daunt or dismay His servants. As He brought life out of death, so should they persevere, trusting that in His strength they may even do likewise. And whereas he who looks on the doings of mankind with a worldly eye, if his eye be keen enough to pierce through

the fair coating spread over the surface of life, is apt to feel bitter scorn and disgust at his fellowcreatures; he who looks at them with the higher wisdom of Faith in the Son of God, will not dare to entertain anything like scorn toward any soul for which Christ died, and which is precious in the sight of the living God.

In our Lord's last speech to His disciples, on the eve of His crucifixion, after telling them that in the world they would have tribulation, He bids them be of good cheer; for that He had overcome the world. Wherein lay the consolation of this thought? and why did He, the Lord of the world, descend from His heavenly throne, to fight against the world, and to overcome it? The thought was to cheer their hearts, because He had overcome the world for their sake, and in their behalf, to the end that He might glorify the Father, that He might give eternal life to as many as the Father had given to Him,—to the end that the Father might be glorified by their overcoming the world, through Faith in Him, the only true God, and in Jesus Christ whom He had sent. He overcame the world, to the end that through the glory of His victory all nations might be drawn to enroll themselves in the army of Faith, in that Church militant, which by overcoming the world is to rise into the Church triumphant. He overcame the world, in order to give us an example how we are to overcome it, going before us, as the Captain of our Salvation, that we might follow in His victorious steps, and might walk in the light which His Cross sheds on our path. Yet even this does not exhaust the glory of His victory, the riches of the grace that He obtained for us thereby. He overcame the world, in order that He might mount up on high, and might lead captivity captive; in order that, when

He was seated at the right hand of the Father, far above all principalities and powers, He might receive gifts for men, that the Lord God might dwell amongst us. And ever since He has been pouring down the manifold gifts of His Spirit upon His Church, and upon all who believe in Him. To one He has given the spirit of power, to another the spirit of knowledge, to another the spirit of prudence, to another the spirit of boldness, to another the spirit of fortitude, to another the spirit of perseverance, to another the spirit of patience, to another the spirit of longsuffering and forbearance, to another the spirit of meekness and gentleness, to another the spirit of temperance, to another the spirit of purity and holiness. All these and many other gifts have been given to the prayers of Faith: nor has there been any other limit to the gifts, than the strength of the Faith to ask for them. The more they who have believed that Jesus is the Son of God, have askt of the Father in that Faith, the more they have received. Of these gifts the Church has been built upon the foundation of Faith: and they to whom these gifts have been granted, have gone abroad over the earth, preaching the grace and the glory of God to all nations, each, according to the gift he had received, shewing forth the power of Faith to overcome the world, calling upon his brethren to become partakers in the victory of Faith, and giving them a living assurance that the gates of hell shall never prevail against those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

But how can this be? it may be askt. Where is the victory of Faith? Where is the sign of her power? Or how happens it, if she has all this power, that the world has not long since been overcome? How happens it that

sin has not long since been cast out? How happens it that, after eighteen centuries of Faith, when the world should long since have become the submissive footstool of Christ, it still lifts itself up against Him, and tempts men to cast themselves down from its pinnacles? How comes its sway over mankind to be still wellnigh as great as ever? To these questions the only answer is that of our Lord to his disciples: *Because of our unbelief.* Therefore have we been unable to cast the evil spirit out of the world. Because we have not believed that Jesus is the Son of God. Because, even when we have tried to fight against evil, whether inward or outward, we have fought against it in our own strength, which in such a contest is too surely proved to be weakness. Because we have not believed that evil had been overcome for us, and that He who overcame it is sitting at the right hand of the Father, able and willing to strengthen all who believe in Him, so that they also shall overcome as He did. If we indeed believe that Jesus is the Son of God, — if we indeed believe that the Son of God was made man, and suffered all the weaknesses and pains that flesh is heir to, and died on the cross, for our sakes, that He might bring us to God, — then we shall feel assured that He who gave us His Son, will with Him also freely give us all things. We shall feel assured that the Son Himself desires to be satisfied with the travail of His soul. We shall feel assured that, as He is the Lord of all power and might, He will readily give all power and might to those who seek it at His hands. Whenever we fight against the world in this Faith, we shall infallibly overcome the world: and when we are overcome by the world, through our want of Faith, do we not still bear testimony to the same truth, that he alone can overcome the world,

who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? Finally as it is by this Faith alone that we can overcome evil in this life, so at the last day will it be solely by the righteousness of Faith in Jesus as the Son of God, that any shall overcome the world and the prince of the world.

Who is he that overcometh the world? He who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the Apostle recounts many of the great and heroic deeds wrought through Faith, under the ancient covenant of works, by those who had not yet received the promise. Now Faith, we have seen, has been mightily strengthened since. It has been strengthened by the full revelation of Him in whom we are to believe. It has been strengthened by the adoption we have received, which casts out the spirit of fear, and draws us heavenward by the cords of love. It has been strengthened by the clear light of Christ's example, which enables us to walk without hesitation or wandering along the path of duty. It has been strengthened by the knowledge that the world has already been overcome, for us, and in our behalf, — by the knowledge that our warfare is not ours merely, but a warfare in which God Himself is fighting on our side, and that His omnipotence is the pledge of our victory. It has been strengthened by the gifts of the Spirit, which are ever granted to the prayer of Faith, every fresh gift forming a fresh ground for confidence, a fresh assurance that he who believes in Jesus as the Son of God shall indeed overcome the world. Surely then they who have received the promise, they who have beheld the blessed fulfilment of all that the fathers lookt for, — who have seen it all fulfilled with a largeness of grace and glory, such as the imagination of man had never conceived, — surely they who have

had all these advantages must also have been enabled to shew forth the power of Faith in overcoming the world. The fittest conclusion for these sermons would be a like enumeration of those who have been raised up as the chief heroes of Faith in the Church of Christ, — of those who have shewn the most conspicuously that Faith in Jesus, the Son of God, is the true victory that overcometh the world. And a glorious cloud of witnesses indeed might be called forth from the history of the Church during the eighteen centuries of her existence, a cloud gathering from all lands, and rising like the morning at once from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south (Ps. cvii. 3). Only it would require the pen of an angel to set forth all the noble deeds which have been wrought during that period by Faith in Jesus as the Son of God. Nor will they be set forth until the day when the Author and object of this Faith collects the jewels for His everlasting crown; when in every jewel, of whatsoever shape or hue, it will be seen that Faith has been the shrine wherein the light embosomed in it has been held. And even if the conviction of my own feebleness did not withhold me from such an attempt, the time would not allow me to do more than choose out here and there a very few of the most remarkable among the achievements of Faith.

By Faith the first believers sold their possessions and goods, and had all things common.

By Faith the Apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ.

By Faith Stephen saw the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. By Faith, when stoned, he fell asleep, praying that God would not lay the sin of his death to the charge of his murderers.

By Faith Peter received the Gentiles into the Church.

By Faith Paul called the nations to the knowledge of Christ. By Faith he founded Church after Church, whithersoever he went. By Faith he stood before Felix, and Festus, and Agrippa. By Faith he was in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. By Faith he gloried in the things which concerned his infirmities. By Faith, being carried in bonds to Rome, he turned his captivity into the means of enlarging and strengthening the empire of Christ. By Faith he forgot the things that were behind, and, reaching forward to the things that were before, ever prest toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. By Faith he desired to depart and to be with Christ. By Faith he was content to remain for the furtherance and joy of our Faith.

By Faith the glorious company of the Apostles sealed their testimony in behalf of their crucified Lord with their blood.

By Faith the Son of Thunder, who desired to call down fire on the Samaritan village, became the Apostle of love. By Faith he sought out the backsliding convert amid his band of robbers, and brought him back to the obedience of the Gospel. By Faith, when too feeble to walk, and scarcely able to speak, he still bad his friends carry him daily into the midst of the congregation, and said again and again, *Little children, love one another*

By Faith Polycarp, when above ninety years old, being commanded to revile Christ, with the promise that he should be set free, replied, *Eighty and six years have I served Him; and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King, who has saved me?* By Faith, as the

executioners were about to nail him to the stake, he said, *Leave me as I am: for He who ordains that I should endure the fire, will enable me to stand unflinchingly at the pile, without your nails to hold me.* By Faith, while they were kindling the fire, he prayed: *O Father of Thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom I have received the knowledge of Thee, O God of angels and powers, and of the whole creation, and of the whole family of the just who live before Thee, I bless Thee that Thou hast thought me worthy of this day and hour, to obtain a portion among the martyrs, in the cup of Christ, for the resurrection both of soul and body to eternal life, in the incorruptibleness of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, and for all things, I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, through the eternal Highpriest Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son; through whom be glory to Thee along with Him in the Holy Spirit, both now and through all future ages. Amen.*

By Faith thousands of weak frail mortals, even women, felt their hearts glow with joy, when they heard the rabble in their bloodthirsty frenzy cry, *The Christians to the lions!* the exultation of the victims triumphing over that of the murderers.

By Faith the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church.

By Faith the persecuted Christians, in a time of terrible pestilence and famine, alone tended and nurst their persecutors, buried them when they died, and calling the people together distributed bread amongst them; whereby the people were moved to glorify Him, whose servants shewed such love to their enemies (AC).

By Faith the Syrian hermit, Telemachus, came from the far East to Rome, and, resolving to stop the gladiatorial

contests, rusht into the middle of the amphitheatre, and threw himself between the combatants: whereupon, though he was slain by the fury of the populace, yet the horrour excited by the act, and the admiration of his selfdevotion, brought about the abolition of those games, which the emperors had been unable to suppress (AD).

By Faith Ambrose preserved the churches of Milan from the Arian empress and her Gothic soldiers. By Faith, making use of rebukes and warnings and threats, he withheld Valentinian from sacrificing to idols. By Faith he forbad the bloodstained Theodosius to approach the altar, until, as he had followed David in his crime, he had also followed David in his penitence; whereby the emperor was moved to an earnest and lasting repentance.

By Faith Chrysostom, when deposed, an aged exile in a remote savage land, assailed by all manner of sufferings, still watcht over, exhorted, and comforted, his Church at Constantinople, still laboured for extending the kingdom of Christ among the heathens, and died with the words he was ever repeating on his lips, *Glory be to God for all things!*

By Faith Athanasius, during forty years of persecution, in banishment time after time, upheld the true doctrine of the Holy Trinity against the power of the emperors, and was the chief human means whereby that doctrine was received and acknowledged as the central truth of the Catholic Church.

By Faith Gregory, when he saw the captive Angles, exclaimed that, were it only for their beauty, they ought to be received into the brotherhood of the angels, and sent Augustin to preach the Gospel in this land.

By Faith Boniface, leaving his home, and refusing high

ecclesiastical honours, went forth into the wilds of Germany, to convert the heathen natives. By Faith he cut down the huge oak of Thor, while the people were raging tumultuously around, expecting that the vengeance of the god would burst upon his head. By Faith he built a church to the true God, out of the oak he had cut down, and persuaded the people to worship there. By Faith he baptized above a hundred thousand souls in the name of the Holy Trinity, and built many churches and convents in dreary savage lands. By Faith, when placed at the head of the German Church, he still, in his seventy-fifth year, persevered in enlarging the kingdom of Christ, went forth to convert fresh heathen tribes, and met his martyrdom with patient joy.

By Faith the Hermit Peter and Bernard stirred up the nations of Europe to march as one man, kings and princes and lords, with their assembled vassals, to deliver the birthplace and tomb of the Saviour from the unbeliever.

By Faith Bonaventura, being askt in what books he had learnt his marvellous wisdom, pointed to his crucifix.

By Faith Elizabeth of Hungary, the daughter of kings, the wife of the Duke of Thuringia, being left a widow at twenty, gave all she had to the poor, and dwelt amongst them as their servant, labouring for them, visiting them, waiting upon them, nursing them, by word and deed teaching them the love of God.

By Faith the Waldensians retired among mountain fastnesses, and dwelt in the caves of the Alps, that they might preserve their religion in undefiled purity; and thus have been enabled to preserve it, like the snows around them, under all manner of persecution, through six centuries,

— a period seldom vouchsafed to the glory of anything earthly.

By Faith Wicliff, the morning-star of the Reformation, rose out of the darkness, and heralded the coming daylight.

By Faith Luther proclaimed his Theses against the doctrine of Indulgences. By Faith he burnt the Pope's Bull, and thereby for himself and for millions and millions after him threw off the crushing yoke of Rome. By Faith he went to the diet at Worms, though warned that the fate of Huss would await him, going, as he said, in the strength of Christ, despite of the gates of hell, and of the prince of the powers of the air. By Faith, a single friendless monk, standing before the princes of the Empire, he witnest a noble confession with meekness in behalf of the truth. By Faith he translated the Bible, and received the glorious reward of being the interpreter of the word of God to his countrymen for all generations.

By Faith Rogers, the protomartyr of our Reformation, when his wife and his eleven children met him on his way to the stake, and an offer of life and pardon was brought to him in their sight, if so be he would recant, walkt on with a stout heart, and washt his hands in the flames while he was burning, rejoicing in the firy baptism whereby he gave up his soul to God.

By Faith Ridley lookt forward with joy to the fire that awaited him, and bad his sister come to his marriage.

By Faith the aged Latimer, when stript to his shroud, rose up on high, as though his very body had been new-strung, and cheered his own heart, and his companion's, by the prophetic assurance, that they should on that day

by God's grace light such a candle in England, as would never be put out.

By Faith the noble army of martyrs mounted in their firy chariots to heaven.

By Faith Oberlin went forth among the Vosges, and labouring in all things at the head of his people spread the blessings of religion and civilization among the wild inhabitants.

By Faith Clarkson and Wilberforce overthrew the slave-trade: and as it is the nature of the grain of mustard-seed to grow until it has become great among the trees of the forest, so through their Faith has slavery been already abolisht throughout the British dominions.

By Faith Simeon, preaching the word of God in this town through a long life of persevering activity, became the instrument of sending forth zealous preachers of Christ into all parts of the country, and thus contributed, under God's blessing, more than any other man, to that revival of true religion, which has taken place of late years amongst us; and which, we hope and pray, will increase and spread, until in England at least the knowledge of God shall fill the land, as the waters cover the sea.

And what shall I say more? For the time would fail me to tell of Ignatius, and Justin, and Cyprian, and Perpetua, and Basil, and Augustin, and Patrick, and Columban, and Bede, and Huss, and Melanchthon, and Zuinglius, and Calvin, and Knox, and Hooper, and Rowland Taylor, and Bunyan, and George Fox, and Penn, and Baxter, and Flavel, and Wesley, and Zinzendorf, and Francis Xavier, and Eliot, the Apostle of the Indians, and Schwarz, and Hans Egede, and Howard, and Neff, and Henry Martyn, who by Faith subdued kingdoms for Christ,

wrought righteousness, obtained the fulfilment of the promises, stopt the mouths of blasphemers, and filled them with hymns of praise, quencht the violence of hatred, melting it into love, out of weakness were made strong, waxt valiant in the fight against Satan, and turned armies of aliens to bow before the name of the living God. Women and maidens withstood the entreaties of their parents and children, looking with longing for the moment that was to open the gates of immortality. Children rejoiced in the thought of the glorious city to which they were going. Others, thousands upon thousands, devoted their lives to the humblest labours in the service of Him, whom they would gladly have glorified by their deaths. Wherefore, seeing, brethren, that we also are compast about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and our besetting sin, and let us run the race set before us with patience, looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith.

And now, my young friends, before I bid you farewell, let me address a few words of affectionate exhortation more especially to you. We have been speaking of battles and of victories, of great warriors and heroes, the battles and victories, the warriors and heroes of Faith. The thoughts of battles and victories are thoughts you are most of you familiar with. There are few young men, at least in your rank of life, whose hearts have not often been moved by dreams and visions of battle and victory, under one form or other. For such thoughts are congenial to the ardent generous spirit of youth, which magnifies and longs to devote itself to whatever attracts it. Some of you may never have risen in such thoughts beyond your sports and games. Some may have dreamt of

contests and victories in the various fields of knowledge; others on the stage of civil and political life. Some, — though in times of such general peace among nations but few, — will dream of open war, of the trumpet, the plumed array, and the charge. In all such conflicts there is a stirring and joyous excitement, which braces our faculties to the utmost: and few can resist the mighty fascination that lies in the thought of victory. Such feelings are natural, are unquenchable and irrepressible: nor are they altogether to be reprehended. Our great poet, who sang how Paradise was Lost and Regained, has ventured to attribute something of the sort to the boyhood of the Saviour.

> Victorious deeds
> Flamed in his heart, heroic acts; one while
> To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke;
> Then to subdue and quell, o'er all the earth,
> Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
> Till truth were freed, and equity restored.

It may be, that in this picture the human element may be brought forward too strongly. This was a difficulty inherent in the subject, which no genius could surmount. Never has our Lord been represented as He was, except in the divine simplicity of the Gospels: which thus is among the surest marks of their truth. But, as the sight of Goliath kindled the heart of David, and made it burn with desire to overthrow the giant who defied the armies of the living God, so to the noblest among the sons of men would it have been a lifegiving hope, to raise up the people of God out of their slavery, and to cast down the idolatrous dominion of Rome. In our days too there are Goliaths to be overthrown: yea, in these our days there is brute violence to be subdued,

and proud tyrannic power to be quelled: there are truths to be set free, and rights to be establisht. And well may the noblest soul among you burn with desire to go forth in this great warfare. Only you must steadily bear in mind that the good of the conflict does not lie in the conflict itself, but in the end to be attained by it, — that you are to fight, not for fighting's sake, but in order to accomplish some purpose: and this purpose is not to be your own glory, your own distinction, your own aggrandizement, but something that will promote the glory of God, and the good of His creatures. In order that you may not misdirect your efforts, you should recognize what is the true source and meaning and object of those warlike feelings, which are so ready to flame up within you, and which, as they may be mighty auxiliaries in the cause of good, may also be terrible engines of evil. They betoken and admonish you that, so long as you are on earth, you are in a state militant, and members of a Church militant, — that you are not, and may not be at peace with the world, such as you find it, whether around you, or within you, — but that you have a post to gain and to maintain, and that this cannot be done without an arduous and continuous struggle. This post can only be gained, can only be maintained, by Faith. Faith must lead you to desire it: Faith must rouse you to seek it: Faith must strengthen you to conquer it: Faith must give you endurance and watchfulness to preserve it. You have a formidable enemy to battle against, Sin, in all its forms, of ignorance, and folly, and reckless desolation. You are to fight against Sin, both within your own hearts, and in the world; but above and before all within you. Nothing

effectual can be achieved outwardly, no victory of any moment can be gained, until Sin is subdued and quelled within your own hearts. In each warfare Faith is to be your weapon, — your shield, as St Paul terms it, to defend you against Sin, when it assails you with any of its poisoned arrows, — your sword, to fight against Sin in the world, when it has been so far brought into subjection within you, that you may aspire to be enrolled in the army which God sends forth to wage His battles against evil. Do not invert the rightful order. Do not fancy that you can work any good in the world, until the evil spirit has been cast out of your own hearts. Else your very best acts will be marred by selfishness: your virtues will only be splendid vices. Strive therefore in the first place to cast out the evil spirit from your own hearts. Pray to God to cast it out. This is the might, and this is the difficulty of prayer, that it is altogether a work of Faith. Pray to God to strengthen that Faith in you, which will enable you to cast out, and to keep out the evil spirit, even the Faith in Jesus, His Eternal Incarnate Son. And then go forth on your heavenly mission to cast out sin from the world, and to bring the world out of the miserable wilderness of unbelief into the blessed Paradise of Faith. O if such a body as I now see around me, so gifted, so fitted out with human learning and knowledge, as, unless you grievously misspend and waste your time, you may be, before you leave this university, — if such a body were to go forth with united hearts, hearts united by the Faith of Christ and by the Love of God, — if you, my brethren, were to go forth in this spirit on your various missions, — then might we hope that manifold blessings would be

poured down on your labours, and that the heart and soul of England would arise in freshness and joy out of the deathsleep which is lying so heavily on many parts of the land. Go forth in this spirit, my dear young friends; and may God bless you with His choicest blessings! Go forth in Faith to overcome the world, strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might: and may Christ give you, as He has promist to him that overcometh, to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

SERMON VII.

THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT:

PREACHT BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
ON ADVENT SUNDAY 1828.

PREFACE.

THE following sermon is publisht in deference to a wish exprest by a considerable number of the congregation before whom it was preacht. Several of the arguments in it, I am well aware, are crudely developt; and the principles asserted are feebly supported by the proofs: but an attempt to supply these deficiencies would entirely change the nature of the discourse, in which there was so much ground to be traverst, that it could only be done hastily and cursorily.

On one point however I must allow myself a few words. For it has been suggested to me by more than one friend, for whose judgement I have a high respect, that the sentences on the aberrations and extravagances of the reasoning faculty may easily be misconstrued into a dissuasive from all severe exercise of thought: and I have been askt, what guide we are to trust to, if our Reason itself is so apt to lead us astray. Perhaps the ambiguity may result in part from the deficiencies of our philosophical language, which is so wanting in clearness and

precision, that we can hardly make sure of being rightly understood, without defining the terms we employ, or even by doing so. The word *Reason*, for instance, is often used to signify the whole complex of our reflective faculties; while at other times it is restricted to the logical faculty, or the power of drawing inferences. In the former sense, Reason is much less likely to err: although even then it needs to be continually refresht and replenisht by influxes from the Imagination, and from the Heart. For in man's spirit, as in his body, the circulation ought to be in constant activity, that no member may be paralysed, but all perpetually recruited and renewed. In the latter sense, on the other hand, Reason has often been a fruitful parent of errour and mischief, especially since the middle of the last century: and in this sense I have used the word, when speaking against it. When nothing more than the mere faculty of reasoning, Reason is most fallible; as is proved by the myriads of abortions and misgrowths, which swarm in the history of philosophy and science. This its fallibility does not arise merely, or mainly, from slips of inaccuracy; though such blunders also, at any link in a chain of argument, render the whole chain brittle and untenable. Reason has erred still more from its neglect of those corrections and adjustments, which must be introduced at every step, before logical inferences can become scientific inductions; and from its precipitance in building up systems, by arbitrarily imposing its own forms on outward objects, instead of searching laboriously among the multitude of those forms for such as will fit them. Yet the first and essential axiom of the Reason is its own infallibility. This infallibility however only belongs to it, while it continues in the regions of pure speculation. The moment it

begins to realize and embody its truths, its high prerogative is at an end. Every theorem in geometry is unquestionable: but nothing is easier than to mistake in applying it. The same holds of all other logical propositions. So that the faultiness does not lie in Reason itself: it proceeds from the abuse and misapplication of Reason. Like every other faculty, when rightly exercised, Reason is most beneficial; when wrongly, it may be most injurious. Indeed all intellectual wrong, when traced to its source, will be found to take its rise in moral wrong. If we discover so many *faults*, as the geologers call them, in the structure of our minds, it is because our passions have heaved them out of their places, and destroyed their original integrity and order. Thus, if Reason of late has been somewhat overbearing, the Will has pusht her on. It costs so much less trouble to construct a system out of one's own brains, than to dig in the quarries of Nature for materials to rear it: the work goes on so much more rapidly: there is something so fascinating in the show of compactness and completeness: and we are all too fond of fancying that Wisdom will spring out of our head, as she is fabled to have sprung out of the divine head, in the fulness of her growth, and the panoply of her power. This delusion is the chief of the errours against which Bacon lifted up his mind: and in the fields of natural philosophy it has been greatly checkt by the *Novum Organum*. In moral speculation on the other hand, it has become far more prevalent and pernicious since Bacon's time, than it ever was before. If a call for a great man could avail to make him lift up his head above the mists that are spread over the land, a new Bacon would assuredly arise amongst us, to accomplish in this region, what his forerunner

accomplisht in the other. Still neither did Bacon discourage men from the exercise of Reason; nor would a follower of Bacon discourage them from it now. To discipline is not to weaken, but to strengthen, by teaching us the right use of our strength. He would only overthrow the tyranny of Reason. He would make it limit, and thereby legalize its authority. He would make it act in consort and coordination with our other faculties. Although it is the majestic and regal fountain-head of law, and although it can do no wrong, he would bid it listen to and carefully ponder the remonstrances and suggestions of the Understanding; from which, whether regularly and constitutionally, or irregularly and fragmentarily, it must needs draw all its resources and means of action: and at the same time he would persuade it to surround itself with the lordly splendour and the living energy of the Imagination. For, as the Imagination, if left without restraint to follow its own conceits, is vain and wild, and teems with fantastical superstitions; — as the Understanding, unless other powers elevate and ennoble it, is narrow and partial and empirical and superficial; — thus the Reason is so far from being all-sufficient in itself, that, without the ministerial offices of the other faculties, it has no hold, and is utterly unable to act, upon anything outward. And if, instead of acknowledging the rights of the other faculties, it attempts to trample upon them, it is sure in the end to become the creature and slave of its slaves. Thus, as has been seen in France, it is trodden under foot in its turn by the rankest empiricism and the vilest idolatry, the empiricism of sensuality, and the idolatry of negations.

Instead therefore of recommending my young friends, for whose use this sermon was designed, to arrest or

impede the progress of their Reason, I would merely exhort them to hold a tight rein over it, to keep it in with a steady hand; and then to let it bear them along with whatever speed it can put forth. To be run away with would not be the best plan for getting quickly to the spot we want to reach, even if no disasters threatened to interrupt such a course. But while the Reason is cultivated, let not the other faculties be neglected. Let it substantiate its forms, and give them a body of sound experiential and historical knowledge: and let not this body be without the vital warmth of the Affections, nor without the beautiful ever-varying hues, the glowing flushes and the ardent glances of the Imagination. So may it become an edifice wherein Wisdom may not be ashamed to take up her dwelling. No one of the powers with which God has endowed us is useless: no one is meant to lie waste, no one to run wild. Only when they are knit together, and working in unison and harmony, may we hope that the vision of Truth will descend upon them.

Trinity College.
December 16th 1828.

Ephesians v. 8.

Ye were sometimes darkness; but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.

We were sometimes darkness; but now we are light. We are most of us only too ready to believe this; and many are not slow to say it. We are prone to believe that we *are light;* and we are not loth to confess that we *were darkness.* Indeed the assumption which vents itself in an exclamation of this sort, is an easy and perpetual, I might almost say a natural and inevitable delusion. All those impulses which lead us to action, tend to make us view the present, whatever it may be, as the paramount object of human interest: and while we are hastening onward, we are careless about what we have left behind. Above all is this wont to be the case during the ardent and hopeful season of youth, when the mind, at least in those who have been endowed with a capacity of receiving speculative truth, yearns after it with impatient longing, and on catching sight of it, or of some phantom wearing its likeness, will rush forward to embrace it with the passionate fervour and prodigal devotedness of a first love. At such an age it cannot be expected that they, who have never yet been trained by experience duly to estimate the dimensions of things, and to discriminate between what they are and what they appear to be, — it cannot be expected that they, who have never been taught to limit their hopes, to distrust the stirrings of their affections, or to set bounds to their confidence, — should anticipate the calmer and more measured judgement of maturer years; that they should refrain from attaching a disproportionate importance to

that which for the moment is wholly engrossing them. One cannot expect, — scarcely ought one to wish, — that the brilliancy of the youthful eye should be dimmed by the lacklustre discretion of age. Nor is it to be wondered at, — nor, if the delusion were confined to ourselves, if we were not so apt to presume that the same change from darkness to light, which we suppose to have taken place in our own intellects, must also have taken place in the world, would it be much to be regretted, — that every fresh light, which at such an age is let in upon the mind, should so dazzle its unpractist organs, as to make it fancy that it has hitherto been wandering in darkness, and has only now at length suddenly come forth for the first time into the full noonday light and radiance of heaven. Doubtless the snake must often cheat itself with the vain belief that its slough has already been cast off. Doubtless that insect, in which Philosophy has delighted to contemplate the symbol of the emancipated soul, must many a time fondly imagine that the term of its imprisonment is already arrived, that its shell is falling away, and that it is already rising out of the state, in which its doom was to creep and crawl about the earth, into a life of paradisiacal innocence and playfulness and freedom and joy.

I would not therefore severely reprehend a delusion of this kind, so long as it is nothing worse than an overflowing of ardent admiration for the new light which has just been dawning upon us. But we can never transgress, however slightly, with impunity. The moment we stray out of the right path, we are beset by a crowd of temptations, which previously durst not shew themselves, but which now lure us further and further away from it. Indeed it is mostly by excess in something which seemed

to be good, that the better natures, among those who have ended in becoming children of evil, originally set out in their devious course. For Satan has not forgotten his old craft: he well knows that there are many, whom in no way can he so easily inveigle, as by transforming himself into an angel of light. The delusion I have been speaking of may at first betoken nothing more reprehensible than a somewhat extravagant and ill-regulated enthusiasm. But ere long, unless it be checkt, worse vices will cluster around it. Nothing is more flattering, or more congenial to our vanity, nothing more likely to foment it, than the notion that we have just been accomplishing something extraordinary. For vanity, according to its perishable ephemeral nature, is mostly ready to give up our past selves, and not unwilling to look back on them with scorn, in order that it may perch with a more confident tenacity, grinning selfcomplacently, on our present selves. It is ready to sacrifice everything, even the choicest recollections of our own past lives, in the reckless delirium of its self-idolatry. There is something estimable on the other hand, something reverential, and almost sacred, in that form of self-love, — if I may be allowed to rescue this word from the ignominy which in its customary acceptation it amply deserves,— in that sober, meditative, meek self-respect, which fixes on the more enduring parts of our being, and dwells with fondness on the remotest recollections of the past, in proportion as they have any of that permanence, which cannot belong to anything corrupt. Such feelings belong to our immortal nature, to our continuous indestructible selfconsciousness, which could not exist without them, and which would be bare and barren unless it cherisht them. They are the blossoms which are ever dropping from the

higher branches, as tokens of love and thankfulness, upon the roots. Nor are they ever found in freshness and vigour, except in the gentler, the less worldlyminded, in those whose hearts have neither been hardened by their selfishness, nor hollowed out by their vices. Persons of this character will not be led hastily to despise the whole of their antecedent existence as darkness, nor to exult and boast that the veil has now at once been completely withdrawn, and that they are basking beneath the unclouded meridian splendour of truth. They will have too great a reverence for their past, and too wholesome a distrust of their present selves. Indeed there is hardly any sign, which so clearly shews that a life has been spent in somewhat of harmony with the voice of Duty, and not unblest by its smiles, as when we see the aged, after the storms of mid-life have subsided, look back with lively and thankful remembrance to the springs of innocent joy, which gusht spontaneously out of their hearts in the years of their childhood (AE).

Among the young however, few, at least of those in whom anything is teeming, are of this mood. The sudden and violent changes, which we often see in their minds, and which in them are natural and excusable, and may easily be commendable, are not seldom accompanied by a vehement dislike, and almost contempt, for whatever is akin to the notions they formerly held. They are apt to fancy they have sprung up all at once, from a state of nonage and ignorance, into the full maturity of approved wisdom; while in fact they are merely bowing down to the newest idol of the day, and joining in the fanatical worship of the latest paradox cast up by the eddying waves of popular opinion. Moreover, by a confusion and transfer

not uncommon, when the mind perceives nothing in the world around it except its own image and reflexion, they will assume with little scruple, that a change answerable to the one within their own breasts must also have been going on at the same time in others,—that all mankind have till now been lying under the same thick darkness, from which they have just escaped, and that all mankind must have been passing in like manner out of that darkness into light, or that, if they have not, they ought to be dragged and driven.

It is the frequency of this very delusion, that has given our age its revolutionary character. We have asserted that *we are light*, and that *we were darkness*, with equal eagerness and vehemence. In so doing we have been emboldened by the exclusive dominion which, during the last half century, Reason has usurpt over all our other faculties. The absolute supremacy of Reason, that is, of certain logical processes, in the concerns of mankind having once been acknowledged, Reason too, according to the usual fate of despots, became a tyrant: nor was there any act of tyranny, however irrational, that she shrank from committing. Although in no operations, as in this place we know well, are errours more likely to occur, or often more difficult to be detected, still Reason is at once so headstrong and so heartless, that no consideration for her own infirmity, or for that of others, will deter her from pursuing her course. If her career has not been attended in all countries with the same convulsions, which in some have overthrown the whole fabric of society, and swept away every ancient institution, this has not been owing to any relenting, or to any selfcontroll, on her part, but to the checks imposed on her by feelings which are not so easily

misled, and by the loyal attachment to hereditary usages and to inviolable rights. Still in England also have there been numerous examples of a like infatuation, no less active, though hitherto less destructive. Witness the wild and dreary daydreams of our political system-mongers, — the audacious and baseless fabrics which have been thrust up in defiance of all sound moral and speculative philosophy, — the mechanical schemes of education, which have taken everything into account, except that the beings they had to deal with were children, and that the beings they had to form were to be men. This place, and the limits I am bound to set to this sermon, prevent my citing particular cases: nor is it requisite. Every thoughtful observer will have registered many such in his memory. He will call to mind the various short roads to universal knowledge, the multifarious panaceas against moral and political evil, to which we have been invited year after year, which have found their votaries and their victims, and after a while have been abandoned and forgotten: or at all events that which was proclaimed as the groundwork of a new era, has had its overweening pretensions curtailed, and has been employed in the subordinate station for which it was fitted. For the progress of the errour has mostly been the same. A solution had been discovered for some one, or for some few particular problems, — a clew to some one particular chamber or closet in the vast impermeable labyrinth of knowledge, — a remedy which might charm or quell some one among the tumultuous insurgent swarm of human diseases. Hereupon the discoverer straightway persuaded himself, that, having done one thing, he had done everything, — that he had found a solution for every insoluble problem, a clew to the whole of the labyrinth, a

nostrum for every form of disease: and these assumptions have been accompanied, as was natural, by a contemptuous rejection of all other methods, however long establisht and approved. The boast of the age has been, not merely that we are wiser than our ancestors, but that, while we are perfectly wise and clearsighted, our ancestors were utterly ignorant and blind. Often too they who have reacht one step higher on some one of the ladders of knowledge, dizzied by their elevation, have madly cut the ladder in sunder, for the sake of breaking off all connexion with those on whom they were scornfully looking down; forgetting that only by the help of that connexion could they ever have mounted so high, and that the moment it is dissolved they must fall to the ground; forgetting that all human improvement must be gradual, — that we can only advance step by step, — that there is no absolute beginning upon earth, — that the law of continuity cannot be infringed, — that the chain of causes and effects cannot be broken; forgetting in fine that, if the earth were to be stript of her heavenly mantle, and left naked in bare space, she would never be able, by her own revolutionary energy, to pass from darkness into light, — and that all that her children can do for her is to kindle a feeble flickering distorting glare, no glimpse of which can be descried beyond a very narrow range.

If therefore we are indeed to pass from darkness into light, the light must have another, an unearthly, a superterraneous source. Now wherever an errour or a folly has exercised a wide influence, we may be sure that it must have been the parody or caricature of some truth: and its extensive influence has mainly been owing to the likeness of this truth, which, however unconsciously, was discerned

in it, notwithstanding the disfigurement. At least it is only when an errour is akin to some truth, which it misrepresents and misapplies, that its consequences are much to be dreaded. For so weak and groveling is errour, it can never lift up its head, unless it can find some truth to cling and climb round; although, in climbing round, it may stunt and stifle that truth. Thus, in the delusion we have been speaking of, there is much that is right and well-grounded, along with what is erroneous and wrong. Our dissatisfaction with our former selves is wellgrounded. Indeed a dissatisfaction of the character described will never be found, except where there is ample reason for it. Only it would do better to express itself more meekly: nor ought it to stop short with the past: it ought to spread out its shade over the present, to keep that from being quite scorcht up. It ought to put off all resemblance to that sorrow of this world, which only worketh death, — which would lead us to slay and to bury the past, and to trample on its grave: and it ought to put on the form of that godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation. True again is it, that we have been sitting in darkness: but so are we still. Unless a hand from above has burst through the darkness, and scattered it, we must still be sitting in darkness. The blaze we may have lit up roundabout us sends forth no genuine genial light: it will soon have burnt itself out: and the darkness will then become deeper, and more deeply felt, than before. Nor is our longing for light a wrong feeling: nor are we wrong in our eager joy to welcome the faintest gleam of it. Our errour lies in persisting to wait on the earthborn partial flame, after we are aware, or may and ought to be aware, that it is nothing better; in fancying that the great object of

life is already in our grasp, that the prize is already won; in counting that we have already apprehended, instead of forgetting the things hitherto attained, and pressing incessantly onward to the things which still lie and ever will lie before us.

In what sense then, and under what limitations, may it be said of us, that we *were sometimes darkness, and now are light?* What must we do, what must befall us, in order that we too may be partakers in this blessed and glorious change? For assuredly the words of the Apostle are not addrest to the Ephesians exclusively. In a certain sense they apply to every faithful member of Christ's Church. It is true, the transition in our days cannot be equally sudden and striking and splendid. The rising of the Sun of Righteousness cannot now be such as the rising of His visible symbol is said to be in tropical regions. It cannot be such as it was at that tropical epoch in the history of the world. It cannot be so instantaneous, so complete, such an immediate revelation and allpervading effulgence of God's glory. Nor can we hear the morning song of the angels, hailing the newborn Daystar. Our burst of light cannot be so strong; nor can our darkness be so thick. For, slight as on the whole we may deem the efficacy of Christianity to have been on the body politic of mankind, in straightening the wry and jointing the dislocated limbs, —slight as that efficacy may have been, in comparison with what it ought to have been, and would have been, unless the Spirit of Evil, after signally failing in his reiterated efforts to crush and overthrow Christianity by open force, had subtily, and alas! far more successfully, hit on a different device, and had tried to gain by undermining, what he could not carry by storm, and had risen up from

beneath in the heart of the temple itself, and had set up his standard therein, the abomination of desolation in the holy place; — still, — notwithstanding all that man's vices have done to taint and impair this greatest of God's blessings, and to keep us from feeding on it as the manna, and inhaling it as the breath of life, — so much has nevertheless been accomplisht, — so many tapers have been kindled at this celestial flame, — so much in our social institutions bears the seal and image, indistinct and evanescent though it may be, of Christ, — so many crosses have been set up by godly men amid the wilds and wastes of human speculation, reminding the wayfarer, at every turn, of the things which ought ever to be uppermost in his thoughts, — that, — supposing, what, God be praised! in this country there is no ground for supposing, that fathers and mothers were generally altogether unmindful of their first and highest duty, the duty of giving back to God the child that God has given to them, — yet even then it would scarcely be possible for any one to grow up amongst us, without being called in some way or other to the nurture and admonition of the Lord, without having his heart and mind awakened by manifold tokens and memorials of his Maker and of his Saviour, and without being incited now and then to look in, were it merely from curiosity, at the glory which in old times was revealed to mankind. For still that glory is abiding upon the earth; and still even in these days we may behold it, if we endeavour resolutely and perseveringly to purge our eyes from the film which by nature darkens their vision. Owing to these reasons, the transition in our days cannot be so manifest, or so broadly markt. We are too well off for it to be so. Yet it may be, that this our vantage-ground may in many cases turn out to be a

dangerous precipice. It may be, that the twilight around us, whereby the gloom of our condition is less palpable and oppressive, may often rather check than animate our desire for something brighter and better: so that, being born in a state of comparative light, we may be the more readily contented to abide in a state of comparative darkness: and then, as twilight is never stationary, but ever either waxing into day, or waning into night, our inward light, from our want of diligence in tending it, will become fainter and fainter, until at length it goes out unperceived. For of this we may be assured: there is no loitering on the threshold of heaven. Those whom God's grace has brought thither, must go onward in the strength of faith: or ere long the flaming sword of the angel will drive them away, and perchance for ever. If on the other hand we do go onward, in that strength which alone will enable us to do so, the strength of faith, — if we do what in us lies to ensure that our twilight shall be the forerunner of day, not of night, — if we turn our hearts and souls with faith and patience eastward, and watch diligently for the rising of the Daystar, — this twilight, — which, if less dark, is not less chill, nay, may often be more chill, than night, but with a chilness producing little of refreshment, and which, though still without the sun, has been stript of the stars, and has neither the warm gladdening sunshine of Christianity, nor the dim mysterious mystical starlight of heathenism, — this twilight will seem poor and cold and blank, when contrasted with the glory of the fully uprisen day. Indeed the transition is such, we shall feel and acknowledge that it has verily been a passing from darkness into light. We shall feel that the words in which St Paul reminds the Ephesians of the inestimable blessing

they had received, may with perfect propriety be applied to ourselves.

For this is in truth and in the fullest sense a transformation. The only way in which man can really pass from spiritual darkness into spiritual light, is when his eyes are opened to behold the light of the Gospel shining upon him, — that light which in these days encompasses us all from our birth, but to which many continue blind for years, not a few, it is to be feared, all their lives; — when that true light, which lighteth every man who cometh into the world, bursts through the dark shroud which sin casts over it, and burns up into a pure and steady flame, and manifests its affinity to heaven. All other changes in man are merely of degree, from more to less, or from less to more. We may improve the talents which have been committed to us; or we may waste them. We may extend our wanderings further and further on the sphere of human knowledge: but the utmost we can accomplish is to return from another quarter to the spot from which we started, having merely made the round of the globe, without once setting foot out of or beyond it. Search as diligently, as curiously, as you may, with the most strenuous desire to glorify the works and the powers of man, the more thoroughgoing your search is, the more it will convince you that the only new element, which has been grafted into nature since the creation, is the religion of Christ,—that this is the one sole absolute beginning, since man was first cast on the waters of Time, the one sole second birth of the world. So that it is not arbitrarily, but with sound reason, that even in our chronology we refer to the coming of our Lord, as the epoch from which all subsequent events are to be dated. For that coming has given a new character to the

history of the world, a new tone and spirit to the destinies of mankind.

That this must be the Apostle's meaning, — that Christ is the light which had risen upon the Ephesians, and brought them out of their former darkness, — would be plain from the uniform language of Scripture, even if St Paul had not expressly added, that they had become light *in the Lord.* It is as a Light, *seen by the people who walkt in darkness,* and *shining upon those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,* that he, who in a more especial manner was the prophet of the Gospel, announced the advent of the Prince of Peace. It is as *the Dayspring from on high, visiting us to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,* that Zacharias, when his tongue was loost, spake of Him before whose face the infant Baptist was to walk. It is as *the Light of men, shining in darkness, but uncomprehended by the darkness,* that the beloved disciple describes the operation of the Eternal Word. In like manner did He, of whom all the prophets and evangelists bare witness, He in whom they were all summed up, declare of Himself: *As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life:* where again, as throughout, we find the same contrast between the light which Christ pours on the world, and the darkness through which the world, when without Christ, has to roll and grope its way. Nor is this a mere poetical image, as it may perchance be deemed by those whose sight has been weakened by wandering too long amid the glittering tinsel of a trifling fancy: it is not an illustration pickt arbitrarily out of a thousand others, which might have served the purpose equally well: it is an essential everlasting type. And

such, if we examine them thoughtfully, we shall perceive, is mostly the character of the images used in the Bible. They are the beautiful blossoms, which enfold and embosom the nourishing fruits of human wisdom, and the vital germs of divine wisdom. They are generally taken from those symbols or emblems, by which Nature shews forth the Will of her Almighty Author: and as His Will is one, so is there a corresponding harmony and unity in its various manifestations. You have often been advised to study the Mosaic Law, for the types of Christ contained in it. You have often been recommended to examine the history of the Jews, for the matters typical of Christ contained in it. Let me exhort you to search also for like types in another book, a book penned by the same hand which guided the inspired penmen of the Bible, the book of God's Creation. So will you learn to look at Nature as you ought to look, to discern something more than the ever-changing colours and ever-waving folds of her garments, to catch sight of those capital features in which her spirit is most visibly exprest, nay, to pierce through her body to her soul, or rather to behold the workings of her soul in all the movements of her body. So will you learn to discover something more than the mere properties of space and time, lines and numbers, in her laws. So will you learn to breathe life into the dry bones of your natural philosophy. To the godly, holding converse with Nature is holding converse with God. It is to them as another and a prior Bible; which, when man's secondary writing has been rubbed off, and when the original characters are brought out and deciphered and rightly interpreted, as with the help of the other they may be, unites from all its regions and spheres in declaring the glory of

God, and in shewing His handiwork. By such a course of study alone shall we be enabled to dive, at least some way, into the meaning of that mysterious declaration, when, on the eve of the heavenly sabbath, God saw everything that He had made, and beheld that it was very good; or to apprehend how all this too has fallen away from original goodness, how the earth was involved in the original curse, and how the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain together, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. To what end indeed have we been endowed with the creative faculty of the Imagination, which, glancing from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven, vivifies what to the eye seems lifeless, animates what to the eye seems torpid, combines and harmonizes what to the eye seems broken and disjointed, and infuses a soul, with thought and feeling, with determinate purpose and submissive beneficence, into the multitudinous fleeting fantasmagoria of the senses? to what end, I ask, have we been so richly endowed? unless, as the prime object and appointed task of the Reason is to detect and apprehend the laws by which the Almighty Lawgiver upholds and rules the world He has created, it be in like manner the province and duty of the Imagination to be diligent in reading and studying the symbolical characters, wherewith God has engraven the revelations of His goodness on the interminable scroll of the visible universe. Both the one power and the other, when rightly employed, will be the active and dutiful handmaids of Religion. They will enable us to recognize the traces of God's wisdom, of His goodness, and of His overruling providence, in all the objects around us, in the lowest, no less than in the highest. Thus to the truly pious mind all

things become animated with a divine spirit. Whatever he sees is to him a memorial of God. He lives with the wakeful consciousness that he is always in the sight of God. He beholds God's eye watching over him in the midst of his business and of his pastime. He feels that God is ever near him, the hearer of all his secret thoughts and breathless meditations. Above all will he thankfully bear in mind, that God's sun, which shines upon him from the sky, at the same time that it is the great source of our earthly blessings, is likewise the type and image of that Son of God, who is the great source of our heavenly blessings; who once manifested Himself, and came down on earth, and poured His blessed light over the whole face of human nature; and who still does so by the Gospel of His word. For to that Gospel none can come, with a humble and earnest prayer for light, but it will be granted to them with a fulness of glory far above what they could ever have expected or conceived.

Christ then being the one great source of all spiritual light, let us consider, although it must needs be briefly and slightly, one or two of the particulars in which the coming of Christ has actually wrought the change spoken of by the Apostle, and brought us out of darkness into light. Let us look at the light He has cast over the nature, the destinies, and the duties of man: as to which we may satisfy ourselves, that He has indeed illumined what before was dark, that He has raised and supported what was low. On the one hand Christianity lays open what God has done for us, and what He designs for us. On the other hand it has taught us what we ought to do, in order to shew forth our thankfulness for the mercies we have received, and that we may not be found so utterly unworthy,

as to exclude ourselves from the blessedness which has been prepared for us.

With regard to both these questions, the two questions of the greatest importance and deepest interest which can engage men's thoughts, little was to be found before the coming of our Lord, at least in those nations which stood without the pale of the Jewish Church, except perplexity involved within perplexity, and uncertainty piled upon uncertainty. The past was dark and wild and dreamlike. The future was gloomy and desolate and spectral, and would have been a blank void, unless it had been peopled by the fantasmal brood of inextinguishable hopes and irrepressible fears. The idea of a future state, such as it circulated in the popular belief, having been handed down, though not without a continual transmutation, from ages which appear to have caught the last echoes of a primeval tradition, — this idea had been so grossly corrupted, and had become so carnal, — more like the visions of a distempered sleep, than the aspirations of a pure and devout imagination, — that the thoughtful could only be withheld from altogether rejecting it, by looking down into the abyss of despair into which such a rejection plunged them. The unquenchable hope of immortality planted in man's heart lookt anxiously around for something external that might justify and support it; for bare Reason could not do so. Indeed so far is Reason from affording any assurance of a blessed immortality, that a blessed immortality, without a mediator, without an atonement, is rather repugnant to Reason. Not that Reason could have devised such a mediation, could have thought of such a reconciling solution for the startling difficulty which stared it in the face at the end of the prospect of human nature;

although, when such a scheme is set before it, Reason, if rightly exercised, may recognize its fitness and sufficiency. Indeed the business of Reason is not so much to divine what is not shewn, as to discern and exhibit the consistency of that which is shewn. When man's inborn feelings claimed and thirsted for a personal immortality, Reason could not administer anything to allay such a desire. Yet until it became ossified, as a consequence of cutting itself off from communion with the affections, Reason would rather have denied itself, than abjured this claim, or stifled this thirst. In her brightest and healthiest days, Philosophy tried to find a solace and support in the instinctive voice of human nature, in that unconscious contagion which has given all our nobler feelings a grasp beyond the span of our earthly life, and in those ancestral opinions sanctioned by hereditary ceremonies, and those immemorial articles of popular belief, which in many cases seem to be groundless, only because they are unfathomable. Even entering and joining the giddy masquerade, in which Poetry had drest up the religious affections, the superhuman longings of the heart, — even this was better than to sit down on the outside shivering in forlorn and homeless destitution,—better than to divert our aspirations after eternity from their rightful object, and transform them, as too many among the best and noblest spirits transformed them, into cravings for an earthly immortality of fame, — better, ten thousand times better, than to lull and extinguish them, drowning the intellectual and spiritual in the animal sensual nature.

Such being man's knowledge, or rather his ignorance, concerning his own future destiny, no less dim and shadowy and misshapen and fleeting were his notions of God, and of

the relation in which man and nature stand to their common Author and Governor. It is true, some of the purest and most eaglesighted minds among the heathens did occasionally, in moments of something like a higher inspiration, dart their glances far beyond the reach of their countrymen, and would seem almost to have caught glimpses of the radiance which surrounds the throne of Truth. Never would I deny this: never would I disparage it. For surely there is something timid and meanspirited and almost dastardly, or at all events most unchristian, in the course adopted by many advocates of Christianity, who have done their utmost to slur over and depreciate and detract from whatever has been accomplisht by human thought and genius. In the ancient apologists such a procedure might be justifiable: for their business with heathenism was to overthrow it, by shewing the abominations which it necessarily involved. But in our days it is no less unfair, no less dishonest, to pick out these abominations as the sole characteristics of the ages anterior to Christ, than it would be to identify Christianity, as her enemies have done, with the evils which, even under her blessed light, have sprung up so plentifully from the corrupt soil of human nature. Reviling the creature is not the only, and scarcely the best way of glorifying the Creator. The Gospel does not fear any competition. It has no need to take any ungenerous advantage of its rival. It will grant man all that he has done: it will even accept the will for the deed, and grant him all that he has earnestly striven to do: and still, beautiful and noble and sublime as may be the truths which man had unveiled, a few simple words from the lips of the Saviour will far excell them all. But why go along with vulgar usage in

talking of rivalry and competition? There is nothing of the sort. Christ did not come to contend with man as an adversary. He came only to contend with that which is bad in human nature. He came to succour and encourage and foster whatever is good in it. Instead of throwing the achievements of human genius into the shade, through fear of their derogating from the glory of Christ, I would rather gather them around His footstool. I would regard them as relics of man's better nature, as broken rays of the glory with which he was originally crowned, as gleams of that twilight which was to precede and to prepare the eye for the sunrise of the Gospel. Nay, whatsoever I could discover in the works and thoughts of man, anterior to the Gospel, yet in harmony with the spirit of the Gospel, I would welcome as a fresh assurance that the Gospel is in harmony with the immortal part of man's nature, with that portion of God's image, which had not been wholly effaced (AF). Indeed, if there had not been something congenial and responsive to Christianity in the heart of man, in vain would Christianity have called to him. Her voice must have fallen unfelt, as music on the deaf, and light on the blind. Nevertheless, as was observed above, Christianity was really an absolute beginning, not merely a new step in the progressive development of mankind. It did not collect and combine the fragments of truth which were already scattered about the world, but came at once from the divine Source of all Truth; from whom also whatsoever of truth had previously been discerned by man, was in one way or other derived. Thus the creation of man was the absolute beginning of a new period in the history of the earth; although in the various tribes of animals, and even in inanimate nature, there had been many foreshewings,

much looking out, so to say, for him who was to be their lord,—for him in whom what was potential in them should be realized and fulfilled. So too is the rising of the sun an absolute beginning in the history of the day, and a passing from darkness to light, though stars may be seen sprinkled about before his rising: for the stars do not prevent its being dark: they give no warmth: they shed no light to work by. Let us admit the utmost that can be admitted: still the truths which man had unraveled or uncovered, were insulated, were partial and imperfect, were narrow and confined, were almost powerless: they were merely speculative, and wanted that certain and stable sanction, which alone can make a truth practically effective: they did not act on the generality at all: they were mostly restricted to a few gifted minds: their influence was seldom great, except upon such as had been personally blest with the vision which revealed them: the disciple soon converted them into a mere scaffolding of ingenious technicalities: the unlearned were strangers to them: the lowly knew nothing of them: they never visited the cottage: it was reserved for the Son of God to perform the godlike task of preaching the Gospel to the poor.

The course of the argument would now lead me to inquire in what manner Christianity has enlightened the path of our duty, and has cleared it of the difficulties and impediments wherewith in the ancient world it was beset. And here again it would appear, that, while we may with sincere gratitude and admiration acknowledge the wisdom manifested in some ancient systems of ethics, those systems from their very nature, from the grounds they rested on, the motives they appealed to, and the logical processes they implied, were ill fitted for swaying and disciplining the

will of the bulk of mankind; — indeed they hardly aimed at doing so; — that, like the religious ideas before spoken of, they were mainly speculative, and, as such, of little effect; — for whatever was truly great and noble in the conduct of the ancients was inspired by very different and far more powerful principles; — that they were wanting in integrity, there being hardly one of them which was not more or less polluted by some foul and abominable stain; and that even what was best in them was imperfect, from the impossibility of reconciling morality with headstrong lawless affections, and with an unhallowed religion, or of keeping it alive, if wholly severed from them. It would appear likewise that all these inconsistencies and contradictions, these struggles between the jarring parts of our nature, have been atoned by Christ, when He identified the discharge of our duties with the plenary indulgence of our purest and holiest affections, — for holy they became through His consecration; when He set forth their original unity, and shewed how every breach of that unity is injurious and destructive to both; and when He declared that the energetic exercise of our whole moral nature in this its unity is the highest outward expression of our worship to God, thereby converting the inanimate statue of heathen virtue into the living body of Christian godliness. I ought further to consider, how far what has been said concerning the Gentiles will apply to the Jews, and to what extent and in what respects the coming of Christ was to them also the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. But these inquiries would carry me too far. Indeed the subject I have entered upon is so vast and multifarious, that it would require several sermons to follow out the many important questions which arise out of it. Far however as we might

pursue them, we should come at last to the very same conclusion, to which the foregoing investigation has led us, — that, notwithstanding the sublime speculative ideas of Philosophy, and the beautiful allegorical fables of Poetry, — if the belief we seek for be one which is to take deep root in the heart, to command the assent of the reason, and to controll the motions of the will, one which is not to be confined to the rapture of the poet, or the trance of the philosopher, but to spread from highest to lowest, and from lowest to highest, ennobling all, humbling all, purifying and sanctifying all, — if such be the belief we seek for, it is impossible not to recognize the justice of St Paul's declaration, that our Saviour Jesus Christ first brought life, as well as immortality, to light through the Gospel; even as it is through Him alone that we can know or come to the Father.

Nor, if such was the case in St Paul's days, has it ceast to be so since. Still, as then, it is on the Gospel that we must rest our assurance of immortality. Still, as then, it is from the Gospel that we must draw our faith in God, and our knowledge of God. Still, as then, it is from the Gospel that we must learn to mould the heart, and to sway the will. Beware therefore, my brethren, lest you be beguiled by vain wisdom and false philosophy into fancying that there can be any sure hope, or any stable faith, or any pure love, except such as springs from the seed sown by the heavenly Sower. Beware lest you be ever tempted to let slip the anchor of your faith in Christ. There may be a deceitful calm for the moment. It may seem, amid the unruffled tranquillity which you are here allowed to enjoy, as if the storms had been charmed, and had forgotten how to rage; as if all danger were over once for all; and as if

every other creek must be as secure as the haven you are now moored in. There may be something fascinating too in the thought of escaping from the bondage, in which you may fancy you have hitherto been held, and of disporting yourselves freely with all your sails outspread, to catch every fresh breeze of truth. But sooner or later, be assured, the winds and waves will lift themselves up, and will hurry you irresistibly along, and will bear you you know not whither. Unless you abide beneath the light of the Sun of Righteousness, the words of the Apostle will in your case be reverst. Whereas you were light, you will be darkness: and the darkness which of late years has envelopt such as have shut their eyes against the Gospel, has been no less gross than the very worst which the Gospel at its rising chased away.

Let me suppose however that you have a righteous dread of such darkness. Let me suppose that you never have been, or that, if you once were, you are now no longer under it. Let me suppose that, to the full extent of the Apostle's meaning, you are indeed light in the Lord. What follows? Is this enough? Are you already become masters in Christianity? Have you nothing more to do, than to lie basking beneath the light, and to let it shine upon you? What profits the light of day to the sluggard who slumbers on in his bed? And what can the light of Christianity profit you, if, after staring at it idly for a while, you throw yourselves back upon the couch of your former nature, and relapse into the drowsy torpour of your ancient habits, or try to lure back the dreamy excitements of the vices which have hitherto charmed you? What can it profit? what can it avail you? Nothing; yea, worse than nothing. It can only make your darkness visible: it

can only serve to discover sights of woe: it can only deepen your condemnation. When the gentle touch of morning light draws back your eyelids, it admonishes you of the labours and the duties of the day, and summons you to arise and discharge them. A like admonition is conveyed by the gentle touch of the light of the Gospel, when it draws back the lids of your souls, and enables you to behold the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Accordingly an inference to this effect is drawn by St Paul in our text. Having told the Ephesians, that they, who had sometimes been darkness, had now become light in the Lord, he commands them to walk as children of light.

Walk as children of light. This is the simple and beautiful substance of your Christian duty. This is your bright privilege, which, if you use it according to the grace whereby you have received it, will be a prelude and foretaste of the bliss and glory of heaven. It is to light that all nations and languages have had recourse, whenever they wanted a symbol for anything excellent in glory: and if we were to search through the whole of inanimate nature for an emblem of pure unadulterated happiness, where could we find such an emblem, except in light? traversing the illimitable regions of space with a speed surpassing that of thought, incapable of injury or stain, and, whithersoever it goes, showering beauty and gladness. In order however that we may in due time inherit the whole fulness of this radiant beatitude, we must begin by training and fitting ourselves for it. Nothing good bursts forth all at once. The lightning may dart out of a black cloud: but the day sends his bright heralds before him, to prepare the world for his coming. So should we endeavour to render our lives here on earth as it were the dawn of heaven's

eternal day: we should endeavour to walk as children of light. Our thoughts and feelings should all be akin to light, and have something of the nature of light in them: and our actions should be like the action of light itself, and like the actions of all those powers and of all those beings which pertain to light, and may be said to form the family of light; while we should carefully abstain and shrink from all such works as pertain to darkness, and are wrought by those who may be called the brood of darkness.

Thus the children of light will walk as having the light of knowledge, stedfastly, firmly, right onward to the end that is set before them. When men are walking in the dark, through an unknown and roadless country, they walk insecurely, doubtingly, timidly. For they cannot see where they are treading: they are fearful of stumbling against a stone, or falling into a pit: they cannot even keep on for many steps certain of the course they are taking. But by day we perceive what is under us and about us; we have the end of our journey, or at least the quarter where it lies, full in view; and we are able to make for it by the safest and speediest way. The very same advantage, as we have seen, have those who are light in the Lord, the children of spiritual light, over the children of spiritual darkness. They know whither they are going: to heaven. They know how they are to get there: by Him who has declared Himself to be the Way; by keeping His words, by walking in His paths, by trusting in His atonement. If you then are children of light, if you know all this, walk according to your knowledge, without stumbling or slipping, without swerving or straying, without loitering or dallying by the way, onward and ever

onward, beneath the light of the Sun of Righteousness, on the road which leads to heaven.

In the next place the children of light are upright, and honest, and straightforward, and open, and frank, in all their dealings. There is nothing like lurking or concealment about them, nothing like dissimulation, nothing like fraud or deceit. These are the ministers and the spawn of darkness. It is darkness that hides its face, lest any should be appalled by so dismal a sight: light is the revealer and manifester of all things. It lifts up its brow on high, that all may behold it: for it is conscious that it has nothing to dread, that the breath of shame cannot soil it. Whereas the wicked lie in wait and roam through the dark, and screen themselves therein from the sight of the sun; as though the sun were the only eye wherewith God can behold their doings. It is under the cover of night that the reveler commits his foulest acts of intemperance and debauchery. It is under the cover of night that the thief and the murderer prowls about, to bereave his brother of his substance or of his life. These children of darkness seek the shades of darkness, to hide themselves thereby from the eyes of their fellowcreatures, from the eyes of heaven, nay, even from their own eyes, from the eye of conscience, which at such a season they find it easier to hoodwink and blind. They on the other hand, who walk abroad and ply their tasks during the day, are those by whose labour their brethren are benefited and supported; those who make the earth yield her increase, or who convert her produce into food and clothing, or who minister to such wants as spring up in countless varieties beneath the march of civilized society. Nor is this confined to men: the brute animals seem to be under a similar instinct.

The beasts of prey lie in their lair during the daytime, and wait for sunset ere they sally out on their destructive wanderings; while the beneficent and household animals, those which are most useful and friendly to man, are like him in a certain sense children of light, and come forth and go to rest with the sun. They who are conscious of no evil wish or purpose, do not shun or shrink from the eyes of others: though never forward in courting notice, they bid it welcome when it chooses to visit them. Our Saviour Himself tells us, that *the condemnation of the world* lies in this, that, *although light is come into the world, yet men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.* Nothing but their having utterly depraved their nature could seduce them into loving what is so contrary and repugnant to it. *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, nor cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.* To the same effect He commands His disciples *to let their light so shine before men, that they may see their good works,* not however for any vain ostentatious selfish purpose,—this would have been directly against the whole spirit of His teaching,—but in order that men may be moved thereby to glorify God.

For the children of light are also meek and lowly. Even the sun, although he stands up on high, and drives his chariot across the heavens, rather averts observation from himself than attracts it. His joy is to glorify his Maker, to display the beauty and magnificence and harmony and order of all the works of God. So far however as it is possible for him, he withdraws himself from the eyes of mankind; not indeed in darkness, wherein the

wicked hide their shame; but in excess of light, wherein God Himself veils His glory. And if we look at the other children of light, that host of whiterobed pilgrims that travel across the vault of the nightly sky, the imagination is unable to conceive anything quieter and calmer and more unassuming. They are the exquisite and perfect emblems of meek loveliness and humility in high station. It is only the spurious lights of earth, the fires whereby the earth would mimic the lights of heaven, that glare and flare and challenge attention for themselves; while, instead of illumining the darkness, beyond their immediate neighbourhood, they merely make it thicker and more palpable; as these lights alone vomit smoke; as these alone ravage and consume.

Again, the children of light are diligent and orderly and unweariable in the fulfilment of their duties. Here also they take a lesson from the sun; who pursues the path that God has markt out for him, and pours daylight on whatever is beneath him from his everlasting inexhaustible fountains, and causes the wheel of the seasons to turn round, and summer and winter to perform their annual revolutions, and has never been behindhand in his task, and never slackens, nor faints, nor pauses; nor ever will pause, until the same hand which lancht him on his way, shall again stretch itself forth to arrest his course. All the children of light are careful to follow their Master's example, and *to work his works while it is day:* for they know that the night of the grave cometh, when no man can work, and that, unless they are working the works of light, when that night overtakes them, darkness must be their portion for ever.

The children of light are likewise pure. For light is

not only the purest of all sensuous things, so pure that nothing can defile it; but whatever else is defiled, is brought to the light; and the light purifies it. And the children of light know that, although whatever darkness may cover them will be no darkness to God, it may and will be darkness to themselves. They know that, although no impurity in which they can bury their souls will be able to hide them from the sight of God, yet it will utterly hide God from their sight. They know that it is only by striving to purify their own hearts, even as God is pure, that they can at all fit themselves for the beatific vision which Christ has promist to the pure in heart.

Cheerfulness too is a neverfailing characteristic of those who are truly children of light. For is not light at once the most joyous of all things, and the enlivener and gladdener of all nature, animate and inanimate, the dispeller of sickly cares, the calmer of restless disquietudes? Is it not as a bridegroom that the sun comes forth from his chamber? and does he not rejoice as a giant to run his course? Does not all nature grow bright the moment he looks upon her, and welcome him with smiles? do not all the birds greet him with their merriest notes? do not even the sad tearful clouds deck themselves out in the glowing hues of the rainbow, when he vouchsafes to shine upon them? And shall not man smile with rapture beneath the light of the Sun of Righteousness? Shall he not hail His rising with hymns of praise and psalms of thanksgiving? Shall he not be cheered amid his deepest affliction, when the rays of that Sun fall upon him, and paint the arch of promise on his soul? It cannot be otherwise. Only while we are hemmed in with darkness, are we

harast by terrours and misgivings. When we see clearly on every side, we feel bold and assured: nothing can then daunt, nothing can dismay us. Even that sorrow, which with all others is the most utterly without hope, the sorrow for sin, is to the children of light the pledge of their future bliss. For with them it is the sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation: and having the Son of God for their Saviour, what can they fear? Or rather, when they know and feel in their hearts that God has given His Onlybegotten Son to suffer death for their sakes, how shall they not trust that He, who has given them His Son, will also give them whatsoever is for their real everlasting good.

Finally, the children of light will also be children of love. Indeed it is only another name for the same thing. For light is the most immediate outward agent and minister of God's love, the most powerful and rapid diffuser of His blessings through the whole universe of His creation. It blesses the earth, and makes her bring forth herbs and plants. It blesses the herbs and plants, and makes them bring forth their grain and their fruit. It blesses every living creature, and enables all to support and to enjoy their existence. Above all it blesses man, in his goings out and his comings in, in his body and in his soul, in his senses and in his imagination and in his affections, in his social intercourse with his brother, and in his solitary communion with his Maker. Merely blot out light from the earth; and joy will pass away from it; and health will pass away from it; and life will pass away from it; and it will sink back into a confused turmoiling chaos. In no way can the children of light so well prove that this is indeed their parentage, as by becoming the instruments

of God in shedding His blessings around them. Light illumines everything, the lowly valley as well as the lofty mountain: it fructifies everything, the humblest herb as well as the lordliest tree: and there is nothing hid from its heat. Nor does Christ, the Original, of whom light is the image, make any distinction between the high and the low, between the humble and the lordly. He comes to all, unless they drive Him from their doors. He calls to all, unless they obstinately close their ears against Him. He blesses all, unless they cast away His blessing. Nay, although they cast it away, He still perseveres in blessing them, even unto seven times, even unto seventy times seven. Ye then, who desire to be children of light, ye who would gladly enjoy the full glory and blessedness of that heavenly name, take heed to yourselves, that ye walk as children of light in this respect more especially. No part of your duty is easier: you may find daily and hourly opportunity of practising it. No part of your duty is more delightful: the joy you kindle in the heart of another cannot fail of shedding back its brightness on your own. No part of your duty is more godlike. They who attempted to become like God in knowledge, fell in the garden of Eden (AG). They who strove to become like God in power, were confounded on the plain of Shinar. They who endeavour to become like God in love, will feel His approving smile, and His helping arm: every effort they make will bring them nearer to His presence: and they will find His renewed image grow more and more vivid within them, until the time comes, when they too shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father. That such may be our portion, may God in His infinite mercy grant to you who have been listening to my words, and to His

servant who has been permitted to utter them before you, for the sake of His Son Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness: to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end.

Blessed and eternal Word of God, who wast from the beginning with God, who Thyself art God, who madest all things, and without whom nothing ever has been or is or shall be made, O Thou, who art the Light of man, the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, we render Thee our hearty and fervent thanks, that Thou didst vouchsafe to quit Thy seat at the right hand of the Eternal Omnipotent Glory, and to clothe Thy Divinity with our incarnate humanity, and to raise up our humanity to a communion with Thy Divinity, and to call us, who were sometimes darkness and the children of darkness, to the radiant light of Thy Gospel, that Thou mightest go before us as the Captain of our Salvation, and lead us in triumph to the feet of Thy Almighty Father. Grant, O Lord, that we may never in any way disgrace our calling, that no bribe which this world can hold out may lure us to desert from Thy victorious banner, that no lurking love of darkness may take up its abode in the secret places of our hearts, but that we may be fulfilled and transfigured by the burning love of Thy light. And to this end enable us, who are here assembled, and all Thy Church, who are on this day offering up their prayers to Thee, to cast away all the works of darkness, and to put on the whole armour of light, that we and they may walk in innocence and

purity, as becomes the children of light, and so may be found meet to rejoice in Thy birth on the festival of Thy Nativity. These and all other mercies we humbly beg, O blessed Saviour, for the sake of Thy love, for the sake of Thy glory, and for the honour of that sacrifice which Thou hast offered up in our behalf.

SERMON VIII:

THE LAW OF SELFSACRIFICE:

PREACHT IN TRINITY COLLEGE CHAPEL,
AT THE ANNUAL COMMEMORATION,
ON THE 16th OF DECEMBER 1829.

Luke xvii. 33.
Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

WHO can ever have read the Gospels, without being startled by these words? Who, if capable of reflecting on his own nature and destiny, has not been led by them into speculations, in which, however great his sagacity might be, it only served to inveigle him from one maze into another? And yet these very words, if we give heed to them with a godly simplicity of heart, afford us a clew to most of the mysteries in this our state of sinful mortality. They hold the keys of life and death. They set forth the eternal irreconcilable difference between the spirit of good and the spirit of evil.

In selecting them however, to place them at the head of the sermon I am to preach to you on this occasion, I have not been influenced by any vain wish of displaying the whole fulness of the truth contained in them, or of diving into the hidden recesses of their unfathomable meaning.

Such an attempt would carry me far beyond the limits to which I must confine myself. Yet it may be well to take a brief view of the general bearings of the subject, marking out those parts of it on which we shall not be able to enter. Then, after such a rapid glance at the country around, we may set about exploring the particular spot, to which it has seemed to me desirable to invite your attention.

Thus the time and place will prevent my engaging in any systematic investigation of the duty enjoined in these words, — of the manner in which that duty, branching through the whole tree of life, is to be fulfilled, — or of the grounds on which it rests. We shall not be able to institute any inquiry into the nature of that life, which we are exhorted to lose; nor may we try to follow it, so far as human eye can, into the darkness of its origin. Still less can we allow ourselves to discuss that great fundamental problem of philosophy as well as of theology, whether that self, which we are to cast away, be the primary seminal principle of our being; or whether it be not rather a noxious alien graft, which has been inserted into the stock, and has tainted all its juices, and poisoned all its fruits; whether our task be, with the help of God's grace, to free the soul from the evil spirit which has taken possession of it; or whether the soul itself be so thoroughly depraved, so essentially corrupt, that nothing remains for us but to fling it away and tread it under foot. Suffice it on this head to remark, that, although certain texts of Scripture may be pickt out, which, when torn from their seat, and interpreted by screwing up every letter to its utmost meaning, may seem to countenance the Manichean notion, that man comes into the world in the

image and as the child of the devil, the whole tenour of the Sacred Volume is directly opposed thereto. If we were without the Bible, — if we had nothing more than our own observation of mankind, and the lessons of history, to guide us, — then indeed it might be made a question, whether the evil principle or the good be the original essential one in human nature; whether that nature be not a sort of border-land between the two, where both have spent their strength, and can only exert a negative neutralizing influence; or whether what seems better in man be in truth anything more than a happy spark struck out by the collision of opposite vices. There are certain theoretical views of man, which amount pretty nearly to this: and without the help of revelation, it may be that the falsehood of those views could never be conclusively exposed. Volumes upon volumes may assail these doctrines with little effect: but there is one volume, which does utterly confound them; and that is the Bible. Its primary declaration concerning man is, that he was made in the image of God. This truth is written on every page: and the whole is a history of God's merciful counsels to repair, renew, and perfect this image. It opens with a picture of that state, when man was yet innocent, before sin broke in and laid waste his heart. It speaks of sin, not as springing up in the first instance within him, from the spontaneous impulses of his own nature, — in which case it might have seemed hopeless to look for a remedy, — but as infused into him from without, by the craft and subtilty of another. So that, according to the account given of man in the Bible, he is not the author of evil, but its victim, — its unreluctant indeed, its crouching, too often its willing victim. Hereby, what on the former supposition must have been almost desperate,

comes more within the compass of possibility. We have a natural capacity of freedom; and if any kind hand will help us to burst our chains, or will burst them for us, we may become free. We have an original aptness for purity; and if any gracious friend will offer us the means of washing away our pollutions, or will wash them away for us, we may become pure. Moreover throughout the Bible Christ is represented, not as a Usurper, who came into the world to dethrone its rightful king, but as the rightful King, who came to drive out the usurper. By nature therefore we are Christ's liege subjects, how far soever by sin we may have become the slaves of Satan.

But time would fail me, were I to explore the grounds of the precept in the text, or of the corresponding duty, which the Gospel first brought out into full light. And as I cannot trace that precept downward to its root, neither shall I attempt to trace it upward, through the endless ramifications of blessing that have sprung out of it. For checkt and blighted as it has been, uncongenial and hostile as have been the elements it has had to struggle with and to assimilate, it has grown up, and spread itself abroad; and its branches have reacht to the heavens; and the nations of the earth have found shelter beneath them. On this theme also the time will not permit me to enlarge. Yet there could hardly be a more appropriate meditation on a day when we are met together to offer up our praises and thanksgivings to God for the manifold blessings which we enjoy; and when we are wont to warm and brighten our hearts, by contemplating those burning and shining lights which He has vouchsafed to set up for His glory in the golden candlestick of this our beloved College. For to what do we owe our blessings? and what is the feature in

the character of our benefactors for which we feel especially grateful? Is it not for the spirit of selfsacrifice? Whatsoever they did for their own sakes, we neither pay nor owe them thanks for. But whenever we believe that they acted, not for their own sakes, but for ours, — that they rejoiced to spend and to be spent for the sake of their fellowcreatures, for the sake of posterity, for the sake of truth, — that they were willing and glad to burn away, if so be they might glorify God, and give light to man, — we esteem and honour and love them. If they still live in our memories and affections, if they have earned an enduring life, it is on account of those very actions in which they shewed their readiness to lose their life.

Nor is it otherwise beyond the walls of this our consecrated home. Look whither we may, if we have an eye for truth, we shall everywhere perceive that the spirit of selfsacrifice has been God's chosen angel for distributing His blessings to mankind. To this spirit we are indebted for our chief temporal, and for all our eternal goods. It is to the spirit of selfsacrifice, — to those who have been animated and actuated by it, in various modes and degrees, often indeed but faintly, often merely at intervals and by starts, but sometimes with the pervading energy of its life-giving, soul-redeeming power, — that we owe all we have, and all we are, our very name and freedom as Englishmen, all that is sound and precious in our constitution, the light of civilization, and the knowledge of truth. All the great benefactors of mankind, all who have done good in their generation, all who have cast the seeds of good beside the waters of futurity, heroes and patriots and sages and confessors and prophets and apostles, all have been moved by the selfsame spirit, all have wrought in the selfsame

spirit; and the good they have effected, so far as it was their doing, so far as it resulted from their will and purpose, has been in proportion to the power and entireness with which that spirit possest them.

In a word, it is by the spirit of selfsacrifice that every good gift cometh. Nothing can be vainer, nothing can be falser, no doctrine can be more pernicious at once to the head and the heart, than that pseudo-philosophy which asserts that it is by a well-regulated and enlightened selfishness, that the interests of mankind are promoted. An enlightened, well-regulated selfishness! Selfishness is abhorrent of all light, is the antagonist of all rule. The only way in which selfishness can promote good, is by an act of temporary suicide, by aping selfsacrifice, and bowing to the restraints which the law of selfsacrifice imposes. When ranging freely, at the mercy of its own impulses, selfishness is the destroyer of confidence, the dissolver of union, the underminer of peace; it poisons friendship; it blasts love; its course is ruin; its end is death. Indeed its whole life is nothing else than a ceaseless never-dying death, the death of a self-strangling intellect, and of a self-devouring heart. Nay, if selfishness were really the sole mainspring of our nature, no such things as confidence and union and peace and friendship and love could ever have existed, even in the visions of the most fantastical dreamer. The more we know of history, the more evident it becomes, that, wherever any great, any real good has been accomplisht, it has been accomplisht by the devotedness of Faith and Hope and Love, that blessed trinity of the Christian Graces. The foe they have had to war against, and who, though now and then vanquisht for a moment, has soon braced up his strength again, and been ready to renew the

conflict, has been the selfishness of man, — under the various forms of self-indulgence, selfwill, selfworship, self-opinion, with their long train of moral and intellectual vices. The struggle has been hard and obstinate: but they who have had God on their side could not fail of gaining ground on the whole. Yet it is by the spirit of selfishness that the spirit of selfsacrifice has been maimed and enfeebled and hemmed in and retarded, so as to have been prevented hitherto from accomplishing its ordained task: and could the spirit of selfishness be cast out once for all from its seat in man's heart, the whole empire of sin would crumble instantaneously away, Satan would lose his hold upon mankind, and the knowledge and the love of God would cover and fill the earth.

And yet, — O shame and woe that we should have to confess it! — the preachers of God's word and the ministers of Christ have many of them for some time past formed an unhallowed alliance with the children of Belial. The philosophy, which maintains that all morality, if turned inside out, is nothing else than an enlightened and well-regulated selfishness, and that this is the only principle powerful enough to make men live and act as they ought, — the philosophy which asserts that whatsoever is to give warmth or light here on earth must be drawn from this black coalmine, — is taught in our schools, is proclaimed from our pulpits. The sheep have, as it were, put on the wolf's clothing, under a notion that by so doing they shall succeed better in drawing the lambs into Christ's fold. In open defiance of our Saviour's declaration, — a declaration which, on account of its paramount importance, as well as of its repugnance to all our pet vices and prejudices, He has repeated under manifold forms, over and

over again, with the utmost solemnity, — in despite of these words, so plain that they cannot be glost over, so strong that they cannot be distorted, many of our brethren, and some at least among them, it may not be doubted, good and pious men, have allowed their understandings to be so entrapt in the snares of a false philosophy, and so dazzled by a specious show of order and simplicity, as flatly to contradict the doctrine of our text, by attempting to combine the precepts of the Gospel with that principle, nay, to deduce their obligatoriness from that principle, which is the prime source of evil, the original parent of sin, — that principle which first led the creature to sever himself from the Creator, to set up the idol of his own will apart from and in opposition to the will of God, and which has ever since been keeping open and widening the breach, and thwarting every effort to close it. They have dreamt of strengthening the building, by cementing it with this universal solvent: and instead of the foundation of self-sacrifice, which Christ laid, they would found it on the quicksands of selfishness, which swallow up whatever comes near them, restless and ravenous and barren as the jaws of hell. Of those who hold these false doctrines I speak not, nor presume to censure them. As sad experience both of ourselves and of the world compells us to acknowledge, that there may be light in the head, and yet that the heart may be wallowing in darkness; so on the other hand is it a comfort to feel assured that errours in the head by no means imply a corresponding want of rectitude in the heart. Among the advocates of an errour, especially when it has gained the sanction of public opinion, many may be excusable and wellmeaning, even where the errour itself is of a heinous and noxious cast. Doubtless some men

have conceived that they were doing service to Christianity, while they were yoking its divine morality in incongruous fellowship with a baser form of Epicurean ethics, and thus were elevating a system, which the wise and good among the heathens deemed too bad for earth, by a kind of apotheosis to heaven, — an apotheosis which, as was often the case in imperial Rome, deified what was a disgrace to humanity. Let those who hold this belief in innocence and sincerity be free from blame. But let all who love the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus, — who behold it set forth in His words and in His life, and who, so beholding it, love it, — unite to cast out such doctrines from the sanctuary. We fear not to face them, when they come against us as foes; but we are at a loss how to deal with them, when they are allowed to creep in amongst us in the guise of friends. Let them be cast out. Let not this University, whose noble office it is to train the youth of England for the generous, magnanimous, Christian fulfilment of all the duties of civil, domestic, and religious life, — let not this University, let not this College, which God has honoured with a charge of such trust and dignity, forfeit her Christian character, by encouraging any one to believe that morality is selfishness in disguise, or that there can be any alliance, that there can be anything but utter hostility between them. Let us be earnest and diligent in declaring, unfolding, and enforcing, the idea of right, the idea of duty, the idea of selfsacrifice. This is what our students want, — this is what they should bear with them from hence, — principles, sound living principles of highminded far-reaching truth, such as may be a light to their understandings, and strength to their hearts, amid the tumultuous pressure of interests, and the chaotic fluctuation of

opinions, which they will have to contend against in the world. He who was the meekest among the sons of men, was moved to an indignant exertion of His kingly authority, when He saw the cattledealers and the moneychangers in His Father's temple. Yet their conduct was hardly so profane, so adverse to the spirit of their religion, as that belying of Christ and falsifying of His word, which debases morality into a matter of barter, a prudential adjustment of profit and loss, turning the house of Faith and Hope and Love into a den of thieves, and preaching the creed of Mammon under the mask of the Gospel. Again I say, let such doctrines be cast out (AH).

But selfsacrifice is not merely a duty which God has imposed upon man: nor is it by the selfsacrifice of man alone that God worketh good. The voice which commanded man to sacrifice his life, was in fact only commanding him to renew and perfect that image of God, in which he was created. For the spirit of selfsacrifice is the spirit of God Himself. It is, if I may so say, that which has been revealed to us as most godlike in the Godhead. It is one and the same with that spirit of Love, which the beloved disciple, — he who among all the sons of men bears the most glorious title, he who was admitted to the clearest insight into the Divine Nature in all the beauty of its holiness, he who was taken into the most intimate communion with that Nature, and rested upon its bosom while it dwelt upon earth, and whose soul thereby became so impregnated with love, that he could not open his lips, but words of love streamed forth, — has declared to be one and the same with God. Yea, the spirit of selfsacrifice is common to every Person of the Blessed Trinity: in the work of selfsacrifice every Person of the Blessed Trinity taketh

part. That spirit was manifested in the work of Creation, when God willed that out of the omnipotent depths of His Wisdom the worlds and all their inhabitants should spring. That spirit is manifested in His continual support and sustenance and overruling guardianship of everything that He has created; cares, which the pride of human Reason, transferring its own frozen selfcomplacency to the Deity, and building up its God out of negations, — substituting the vacuum of infinite nonentity for the fulness of infinite life, and the barrenness of infinite indifference for the riches of infinite love, — has pronounced to be unworthy of the Almighty. The same spirit has been manifested under a still more exemplary form in the work of Redemption; when the Onlybegotten of the Father emptied Himself of His Divinity, to put on the infirmities of humanity, and humbled Himself for our sakes to the lowest deep of earthly humiliation; and when the Justice of God was won by the selfsacrifice of His Love to make a sacrifice of itself. So too is the same spirit manifested in the infinite condescension, the patient ministerings of the Comforter; who, descending on man in the form of the emblem of peace, waiteth by him, and is constantly and instantly holding out the assurance and the means of blessedness, and who will hardly be offended or wearied, but abideth faithfully until the end, if so be that a soul may be rescued thereby from perdition.

Nevertheless it must be granted that our Lord's declaration, in its naked absolute majesty, is one of the foremost among those great Christian paradoxes, which to the proud of this world are stumblingblocks, and to the wise of this world foolishness; while to those who are called, and who, listening to their call, have learnt to

mortify this selfish pride, and to pierce through the mists of this selfish wisdom, they are among the clearest manifestations of the wisdom and goodness of God. Yet why should it be a paradox? except that it shames our selfconceit, and that it would root out that whole tribe of vices, which spring from self-indulgence. Dazzling as the light of this great law may be, when we fix our eyes straight upon it, that light has risen upon us by degrees, and approaches us through an atmosphere which adapts it to our perceptive organs. There is nothing in our text at variance with our reason; provided that our reason has been taught to recognize how a union of opposites is involved in every spiritual idea. There is nothing in the text, but what is confirmed by the voice of our instinctive feelings, and by the whole course of nature, especially the nature of man. If we only look around us, and into our own hearts, with patient and observant thought,—if we make a right use of our various means for storing our minds with the knowledge of God's works and ways,—we shall discern that in this, as in all other cases, the principles which pervade the manifold dispensations of God's power and providence, are the same; even as the laws of matter to which any one system is subjected, are the same which regulate every other system; even as there is an agreement, a concord, a symphonious symmetry, in the motions of all the stars, as they glide along their heavenly paths in the choral dance of the universe. In every order of creatures, along with infinite variety, we find perfect harmony and unity. A like harmony runs through all the different orders of creatures; and they too are bound together by an ultimate central unity. Nor does the unity stop here. The material world and the spiritual are not

independent, unconnected, insulated, the one from the other. On the contrary there is a beautiful correspondence between the temporal things which are seen, and the eternal things which are not seen; a correspondence like that between the body and the soul, — like it even in this, that, while the outward manifestations and symbols of the laws of nature are perishable, the laws themselves are enduring. Hence it comes to pass that, as the Understanding feels the utmost confidence in recognizing its own forms in the outward world, so does the Imagination feel a like confidence in recognizing those ideas there, which rise out of the fontal depths of the Reason, to be embodied and clothed by its fostering hand. How vividly, for instance, are deep truths often exprest in parabolic teaching, above all in the parables of our Lord! In a true parable the connexion between the sign and the truth signified is not arbitrary and fanciful, not outward, but inward. They are the blossoms of the tree of knowledge; and the life of the tree is in them. The sign expresses the operation of a law or principle analogous to the truth which it is meant to enforce. The belief in such a kindred, such a family likeness, if I may so term it, between earth and heaven has in all ages been cherisht by those who have striven to look through the film of the senses. They have rejoiced, when in a flower or an insect they could perceive the symbol of something higher and more lasting: they have tried to read the ways of destiny in the stars: and it has been held a rich reward for years of toil, to detect some new evidence of intelligent working in the forms and phases of matter. Others have delighted in tracing the harmony between the light of nature and the light of grace, between that which we may deduce from the contemplation of the visible world,

and that which has been delivered to us by the oracles of God. At times, it is true, such speculations have ended in fantastical and unprofitable mysticism; when the provinces and offices of our several faculties have been confounded; when the Imagination has overlaid the Senses, and only saw its own fictions in their presentments; and when the Understanding has argued and drawn inferences from these fictions, as though they were the results of actual observation. That such views however are not incompatible with the most practical judgement, and the most scrupulous sobriety of thought, we see in the celebrated work of one of our profoundest divines, a work preeminent for its good sense, and its good faith, united to earnest piety: and many a thoughtful believer has had, and many hereafter will have, the deepest of all motives for gratitude to the teacher who compells us to acknowledge the Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature.

Now this analogy, conspicuously as in the treatise just referred to it has been shewn to prevail with regard to many of the fundamental truths of Christian faith, is assuredly no less conspicuous in the truth declared in our text. Singular and startling as the command, declaring that we must lose our life, in order to save it, appears to the understanding, when judging from a first-sight aspect of things, there is an echo in the human heart, which welcomes and responds to it: and dim sounds were heard to issue from that heart, which announced it with a voice of prophecy, long before it proceeded from the lips of Him, who was its great exemplar and fulfiller. Hardly any form of religion, however debased and unholy, has gained a footing among mankind, in which the duty of selfdenial, of

self-mortification, of selfsacrifice, has not been inculcated under one form or other. For man has ever been conscious that there was something about him, — however mistaken he might be as to what it was, — of which it was necessary that he should rid himself, before he could become acceptable to God. Some kind of purificatory expiatory ceremony has ever been accounted an indispensable preliminary to religious worship. Under a feeling of this sort many benighted victims of superstition have mangled and maimed their limbs, as if the body were the self which it behoves us to lose; while others have forsaken the world, and immerst themselves in the dreary abstraction of eremitical meditations, as if the heart with its social affections were the self which we are to lose. Alas! they discerned not the nature of the life which they were to lose; and therefore they were unable to find life. Unknowing, and unwilling to suspect, that it is the carnal mind, the carnal selfish will, which is enmity against God, and which turns our senses and our affections into abominations, by degrading them into the slavish instruments of self-indulgence, men have ever been eager to throw off the burthen of blame from that carnal mind and carnal will, upon the body and the affections. They have heapt every opprobrious epithet upon that body, which may become and ought to become the temple of the Holy Ghost, — upon those affections, by which nature draws us, as by the light of a parent's smile, to discharge our task of duty in the various relations we are placed in. They have not seldom brought themselves to rack the one, and to starve the other, so they might but be allowed to keep their carnal will inviolate. Indeed in many cases the mortification of the flesh has rather tended to puff up the spirit:

and they who have cut off every other avenue of love, have been fain to fill up the void by doting on their own hardheartedness. Still in their conduct they have evinced their consciousness that they had a life which it was necessary for them to lose; widely and grievously as they erred with regard to the method whereby such a loss is to be turned to our great and endless gain.

Our Lord's declaration may be understood in a twofold sense; and in both it is equally true. In the first place the whole body of sin is to be destroyed. The subnatural man, wherewith the natural man ever since the Fall has been clothed upon, must be stript off, to the end that we may be clothed upon with the supernatural man, Christ Jesus. The caterpillar must cast his slough, to the end that he may unfold his wings. In the next place, after this destruction of the body of sin, this deliverance from it has been effected, our purified body is to be brought into subjection to the body of Christ, and to be united to it as a member thereof, fulfilling all its functions after its kind, not however for its own sake, but for the sake of Christ's body, and of all the other members of Christ's body, that is, of all our brethren in Christ. Of these two acts, — if they are not rather to be regarded as parts of one and the same act, — the former must to outward appearance precede the last. We must die to the world, we must die to sin, we must die to self, before we can rise again and live in Christ. But the latter act will be coincident and coinstantaneous with the thorough accomplishment of the former. For when the love of self has been wholly abolisht, what is there by which and in which and for which we can live, except the love of God? or what can hinder the love of God from entering in and taking possession of the heart,

when the love of self, which had held it in thrall, has been driven out for ever, when the walls which encompast it, the mudwalls wherewith it had fenced itself in, have been razed to the ground? Perhaps however that which seems to be the later of the two acts, may usually in fact be the earlier. Perhaps the walls may be so thick, their foundations may lie so deep, that they will not give way, except at the sound of the trumpet borne before the Ark of the Lord. Perhaps it is only on the entrance of that Ark, that the Dagon we are wont to worship will start from its throne and fall prostrate. Perhaps there may be nothing mighty enough to expell the love of self, except the love of God. When any selfish feeling leads us to sweep and garnish the heart, it remains *empty*. There is a wonderful depth of meaning in that word in the parable: selfishness is emptiness: and a heart that has been swept and garnisht by selfishness, will soon be occupied by worse spirits than before. Nay further, must not the love of God descend upon us from above? Surely it cannot spring up within us, as a natural growth of the heart. Even though we should be able to slay the victim, and to lay it upon the altar, and should pour water upon it and around it, to keep it from the approach of any earthly flame, — and none but the servant of the Lord can do this, — still after all we should have to wait till the fire fell from heaven to consume it. Our whole frame is so disordered, that, without the aid of a wise physician, there is no hope that we shall ever become capable of healthy action, of fulfilling our part as members of Christ's body. At present that which ought to be Christ's body, the body corporate of mankind, is wholly out of joint, and stricken with an almost universal palsy. The members for the

most part, instead of helping, war against one another: each strives to live and to act solely for its own sake. The eye will not minister to the ear, nor the ear to the eye. The hands rob each other. The heart is loth to pour forth its blood. Every limb is impeding the circulation, that it may keep all it can to itself; although, by a righteous judgement, it is itself the greatest sufferer thereby: for pain loves to prey on the full, rather than on the empty. On the other hand, when a member is restored to its soundness, it falls back into its state of subordination to the whole body: it no longer feels itself: it allows, and forwards, and is happy in being a channel for the circulation: it withdraws nothing for itself, except just so much as is needful for enabling it to perform its task for the benefit of its brethren. And thus *there is no schism in the body, the members having care*, not each for itself, but *each for another*.

My purpose was to give an illustration of my meaning; and the illustration has become an instance of the very analogy I was speaking of. The same comparison, you will all remember, is frequently used by St Paul, when he is enforcing the duties of brotherly love and selfsacrifice: and it may serve conversely to shew, that the law, which we are admonisht in the text ought to prevail in the moral world, does actually prevail in the natural world. In like manner every order of beings, of living things, and even of things without life, bears witness to the same great truth, and obeys the all-embracing command of love; which our Lord on another occasion expresses in words of a like import, that *whosoever will be great must minister to others*. The elements, which have no life, exist not for themselves, but for the sake of ministering nourishment and support to

the countless hosts and orders of creatures that live upon them and by them and in them. The sun ministers to the earth, and to all her sister planets, day after day, and year after year, and century after century: and in him we may see how a being, whose essence is purified, even as light is pure, may be ceaselessly pouring forth his life for the good of others, and yet by that very act preserving his life, and crowning it with joy and with glory. The earth ministers to everything that the lifegiving Word has called out of her womb: and she too only seems to rejoice when she can minister abundantly to many: the more she ministers to, the more she rejoices: when there are none, she is desolate and forlorn. Nor does the vegetable world exist for its own sake, but mainly to minister to the animal world. Here however a new class of duties come in; and they also are duties of selfsacrifice. To the end that the ministering of the vegetable world to the animal world may not be interrupted, it has to provide for its own reproduction; and in order to live again in its offspring, it loses its own life. *Verily, verily*, says our Saviour, when enforcing this very law, and speaking of the manner in which He Himself was to fulfill it, and to be glorified by so doing, —when declaring how He was to be *lifted up*, and thereby *to draw all men unto Him*, — *Verily, verily, except a corn of wheat shall fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.* It is in discharging these its tasks of selfsacrifice, in ministering to those to whom it is appointed to minister, that the vegetable world puts forth its powers of beauty, to shew its joy and thankfulness for the privilege it has received. Its flowers and fruit are not borne for ostentation. The flower is the beautiful nest in which the plant cradles its young, lulling

them with odours, and feeding them with honey: while the fruit withers and rots, unless some living creature comes to be nourisht thereby. If the general character of the animal world be not equally innocent and beneficent, — if, as standing nearer to mankind, they seem to have partaken more in that depravation which sin brought upon mankind, —if those more especially, which cannot rise above the earth, may be thought to have suffered from the contagion of that curse under which the earth was laid, — still even here we find manifold examples of like selfsacrificing ministrations, in the powerful instincts of maternal affection, and in the subserviency of so many animals in divers ways to the wellbeing of man. Those animals too, which minister the most to that wellbeing, are deservedly accounted the noblest. This is not a delusive prejudice, converting a subjective into an objective preference, and following the blind dictates of our affections, which are wont to assume that whatever is dear to them must have a peculiar worth in itself. The words of our Saviour just referred to, which declare wherein true greatness lies, prove that our preference is wellfounded. Moreover what is that wild godless opinion, into which Philosophy, in its blindfold course, has now and then plunged, and which represents Nature as a huge self-devouring monster, wherein all orders of being are constantly preying on each other? what is it, except the inversion of that divine truth, that all created things exist, not for their own sake, but for each other? He who quoted Scripture, with the purpose of ensnaring the Lord of life, is never vainer of his craft, than when he can put the interpretation of the fiend on the counsels and ordinances of the Most Holy. Whereas this one conviction, that all things exist mainly for the sake of

each other, were it to become a living principle of thought in our minds, would enable us to solve many of the difficulties, which puzzle and startle us the most in the aspect of the world. And it seems to be chiefly as such, as all working together, one for another, that God, after the creation, declared all things to be good.

If we mount from the lower stages in the scale of earthly creatures, to him who stands at the summit, and who was made to have dominion over the rest, he too, we find, is so framed, that in all his relations, and in every part of his nature, he acknowledges the same universal law. He commands a wider prospect, only in order that he may have a wider range of duty: and forasmuch as he is the lord of all, he is likewise to minister to all. Indeed there is nothing within his sphere, that can rightly fulfill its destination, and accomplish the good it was appointed to accomplish, — the earth will not yield its increase, — the vegetable world will not bring its fruits to perfection, — no animal can be reclaimed from its wildness, and domesticated, and rendered serviceable, and elevated from a minister of destruction into a minister of help, — without human labour and painstaking. Nor does this doom of working for others arise from the Fall. The labour may have become arduous and bitter, and may meet with scantier returns: but even in Eden man was set *to dress it and to keep it:* and that which renders the labour bitter, that which makes the returns so scanty and unsatisfying, is mostly our own sloth and negligence and want of faith. Hereby did labour become a curse. In a sinless state, it would be a pure delight; even as it is the delight of the angels *to fulfill God's commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word.* But since man, in his fallen and selfish

state, would not have been led by spontaneous impulses of affection toward his fellowcreatures to overcome the reluctance which in this state thwarts all exertion for the good of others, he is constrained thereto by imperious wants and necessities. So impotent is selfishness, so totally does it jar against the whole order of the universe, that it can hardly exist a single day without divers acts of selfsacrifice. This is acknowledged by the selfish system-mongers themselves. Only in their determination to distort and sophisticate the truth, and to make it bend to that falsehood which holds their hearts in its chains, they are fain to ascribe such acts of selfsacrifice to a more refined and farsighted selfishness: and then, making use of these as steppingstones, by an extension of the same process, they try to bring all other acts of selfsacrifice under the same denomination.

Again, on turning our thoughts toward man's social relations to his own kind, we must needs perceive that he is so fashioned, as to be in a state of continual dependence on his brethren, and of continual subservience to them. He cannot disfranchise himself from society. He cannot snap the innumerable fibres which unite him to his fellowcreatures. He cannot say, *I will live wholly and solely for myself: my appetites shall run riot whithersoever they choose: my will shall have its full swing: all I do shall be to glut my own lusts: not a limb will I stir for another.* He who tried to run riot in this way, would find that he was running the gantlet: as his hand would be against every man, every man's hand would be against him. In casting off society, he would make himself an outcast. The first blast of such a thought would blight his happiness for ever: the first attempt to act up to it would be his deathwarrant.

Even in the rudest forms of civil society, it implies and necessitates an act of selfsacrifice on the part of all who come within its pale. Every one who enters it must to a certain extent sacrifice his own will, and bring it into subjection to the will of the community, as declared in its laws. The ancient apologue was far more than a mere fable: it could not have quieted the Roman insurgents, except by the irresistible force of truth. That organic unity of the human body, which we were considering just now, — the interdependence of all its parts, each upon all, and all upon each, — that communion of sympathy, whereby the slightest harm done to any one part is resented in a moment through the whole system, — that readiness of ministration, wherewith every member immediately imparts and distributes whatever it receives, only keeping back so much as is absolutely needful for itself, — all this would belong no less to the body politic, in a state of perfect health, and when all its organs were sound and fullgrown. And the nearer the condition of human society approaches to a true state of nature, — that is, the nearer it comes to the complete development of all those social tendencies, which nature has implanted in man, — the more imperative will be the call on every individual member of a state to devote himself body and heart and mind to the welfare of the community.

Much, very much still remains to be done, ere such an end can be attained to. Indeed, as it is solely by the spirit of Christ that selfishness can ever be thoroughly cast out, as Christ alone can deliver man from his selfridden state of nature, so is it only in the Church of Christ, by certain portions of it, and certain bodies belonging to it, that anything approaching to the true idea of a community

has ever been realized. Yet even at present the right of a state on sundry occasions to exact the selfsacrifice of its citizens, the duty of the citizen to sacrifice his property, and even his life, for the state, is universally recognized. More especially is this the case in war; because in war the very existence of the state is periled. So far are the words of our text from being at variance with the impulses of nature, that, long before they were uttered, and among those who have never heard of them, it has been a principle, held to be incontrovertible, that, whenever a state is under the necessity of taking up arms, all its members capable of bearing arms must be ready to risk their lives for it. The united voice of all mankind has declared, that whosoever in such a case shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and that whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. This is not a lesson that we have learnt from governments; as those would insinuate, who, seeing nothing in themselves but falsehood upon falsehood, can discern nothing out of themselves except jugglery and imposture, and who resolve every generous and every pious emotion into a fantasm bred by statecraft or by priestcraft. Our rulers have not drilled this belief into us, in order that we may be willing to fight for them. The feeling is our own. It is the voice of our better nature, heard wherever man has risen a few steps above the level of the beasts of the field: nor can it be stifled, unless in those who fall below that level. He who obeys its dictates is held in honour: he who shuns and disregards them is branded with shame. So has it ever been: so is it now: and God grant that the time may never come when this shall cease to be so!

Let it not be objected, that the desire of honour and the fear of shame have been the motives by which men have

been spurred to venture their lives in behalf of their country; so that in the end it would all come to the same thing, and this again would be merely another disguise of selfishness. For why have all nations agreed with one accord to honour such acts of selfsacrifice, and to scorn the lover of his life, who skulks from danger to preserve it? except from the inbred feeling, that he who is ready to die for his country is fulfilling a noble duty, and that he who prizes his own life above his country is base and despicable and selfish. Nor are these feelings confined to manhood, to those who may earn such glory, or have to endure such shame. The tenderest and gentlest of women, without the stimulating prospect of military enterprise and renown, without anything to look forward to but loneliness and a separation for a long time, perchance for ever, from those whom they held dearest, and for whom they themselves would gladly have braved death, have never been tardy in sending forth their brothers and their husbands and their sons, to offer up their lives, if God so willed it, on the altar of their country. Seldom have they shrunk themselves from this greatest of earthly sacrifices. Seldom have they held back those who were summoned away to battle. Rather have they prompted them and urged them on. Ἢ τὰν, ἢ ἐπὶ τάν. Never, if the sacrifice has been accepted, have they wanted consolation. What too is the real origin and meaning of that admiration, which women in all countries have entertained for courage? of their contempt and loathing for cowardice? Is not this, when traced to its source, one of the modes in which the voice of nature does homage to selfsacrifice, and testifies its abhorrence of selfishness, and gives utterance to that very law, which the Lord of Nature has proclaimed in our

text? Some persons indeed have so benumbed their hearts by quaffing the potions of an icy philosophy, that they deride such feelings as mere symptoms of female vanity, and set about accounting for the reverence, which is felt by all classes, and has been felt in all ages, for military glory, by I know not what medley of delusions. They however, who have read nature more faithfully and clearsightedly, know that, when feelings are universal, although they may be exaggerated and corrupted by no slight admixture of errour, they have always a substantial groundwork. Characters scratcht in the sand are soon obliterated: when they last from age to age, and the waters of time cannot wash them away, they must be graven on the adamantine rock of truth. If a battle be deemed a glorious spectacle, if the very recital of it makes the heart beat high, if maidens of old could gaze upon tournaments with pleasure, if combats even with wild beasts have not been reprobated as they ought to be, it is that the soul of the spectator or hearer on such occasions is filled with the inspiring idea of valiant selfsacrifice and heroic selfdevotion. At least this is the idea which presents itself to better and more generous minds: and it would be difficult to define how far the same idea mingles with and justifies the pleasure of the less generous. Nay, the same idea, however grossly perverted, has no doubt lent its aid in drawing crowds to the prizefights, by which our country has been so much disgraced. In them however we sink into a state, which it is a wrong to unreasoning animals to term brutal; that courage, which ought never to be unsheathed, except for unselfish purposes, being here called into action for the meanest, most sordid ends. But with regard to the admiration for military glory, it is in a

manner sanctioned and hallowed by the name wherewith the Almighty has vouchsafed to be called, *the Lord of Hosts*. Not that carnage and bloodshedding can ever have been a sight wellpleasing in the eyes of the All-merciful; but that the field of battle has been the field on which, more almost than on any other, has been manifested the spirit of selfsacrifice and selfdevotion. And that war is practically a discipline of selfsacrifice, as well as of self-controll, we perpetually see in domestic life; in which hardly any class of men shew so much gentleness, so much forbearance, are so regardless of themselves, and so considerate toward others, as those whose hearts have glowed when the trumpet was calling them to battle.

Thus in the universal feelings of the female heart we have found a witness to the truth of our text. And as that heart will not readily bestow its affection, except on him whom it believes to be animated by a spirit of self-sacrifice; while every manifestation of such a spirit seems to kindle it at once; so by the like spirit in womanhood is the heart of man won to feel that there is something mightier than strength, and to bow down submissively before it. Self-forgetfulness, selfdevotion, the rejection of, or rather the never giving entrance to thoughts which bear reference to self, the complete absorption of the soul in fond cares and anxious watchfulness for the happiness of others, — these are graces which through God's exceeding bounty are not unfrequently met with, in greater or less excellence, in women; such being the heavenly armour of selfsacrifice wherewith God has clothed them for the most sacred and momentous of earthly duties, the duties of a mother. Hence is a mother with her child the loveliest and holiest vision that rises out of the troubled waters of

our nature: and hence did the great master of Christian painting, in whom the spirit of beauty became incarnate, delight to represent the blessed pair under every aspect of tender communion, making it the high aim of his life to portray the ineffable graces, the meek self-oblivion, the rapture of devoted love, which belong to a Christian mother. But in proportion as we revere the sanctity of a dutiful and pious mother, so on the other hand she who forgets or neglects her infant, who allows any worldly pleasure, any selfish pursuit, to draw her away from it, is an object of righteous aversion. In France, it is notorious, during the last century, the ordinary practice among the higher ranks was for mothers to abandon their children to the nurture of hirelings. Had this been the only sin, which reekt up to heaven from the face of that country, the terrible calamities which befell it, and which prest with peculiar weight on the higher ranks, would hardly have been too severe a punishment for such an unnatural dereliction of duty (A1). Those calamities would have been, and in fact they were, a judicial example, engraven on the gates of hell, how they who would save their lives shall lose them, how they who would live solely for themselves will ere long have no selves to live for. Even the heathens cry shame against such mothers. For they too knew the sanctity of the maternal tie. They felt that the woman who went childless to her grave, had but half fulfilled that task of selfsacrifice, for which she was sent into the world: and therefore, as Jephthah's daughter bewailed her virginity, so did the maidens of ancient Greece mourn over their being wedded to Hades. That they recognized the heroic duty of sacrificing life itself, if the dictates of natural affection could not otherwise be complied

with, and that they rightly appreciated the power of the female heart to fulfill this duty, is proved, to refer to a single example, by the exquisite picture of the Theban princess, who, that the body of her brother might not lie without the rites deemed requisite to the peace of the departed, voluntarily exposed herself to death, in the assurance that by so doing alone could she preserve her true enduring life (AK).

The same truth is discernible in our other social relations and affections. There can be no friendship, without selfsacrifice. There can be no love, without selfsacrifice. These feelings may indeed exist, where there is no immediate call for any great outward act of selfsacrifice: but without the readiness to perform such an act, without the spirit of selfsacrifice, they are nought. Friendship implies our temporarily forgetting our own personality in the idea of our friend. That idea must for the time take possession of us: it must become the lord of the heart. So long as the idea of self is the dominant one, the idea of a friend cannot lift itself up. As easily might a garden spring up on a sudden amid the sands of the desert. This in a certain sense is pretty generally acknowledged. None would consider any person as a friend, who could not sometimes be led by his friendship to forget himself for a while, and to make some manner of sacrifices for his friend's sake. With love however it is otherwise. The Evil One has stampt on the word; and the mark of his hoof is upon it. In no other feeling does our carnal nature wrestle so violently with our spiritual nature. In no other feeling is it of such moment to our eternal wellbeing, that we should fight the good fight manfully and knightfully. For that feeling, — which "was given, encouraged, sanctioned,

chiefly for this end, That self might be annulled, — her bondage prove The fetters of a dream, opposed to love," — has been tainted and drugged by an unholy infusion of fleshly passion. That which was to elevate the soul, to deliver it from the dungeon of selfishness, and to bear it aloft into the pure region of selfless being, has become the means of dragging it still lower, and of steeping it through and through in the poisonous vapours of sensuality. Yet even here, though the true voice of nature has been overpowered, it has not been wholly stifled. Still there is a feeling, that love can never be an inmate in a heart, which is haunted by the thought of self. Still there is a pride of blind mistaken selfsacrifice, by which the too prodigal victim of passion is not seldom upheld. And this very feeling, has sometimes been mixt up with the hellsprung delusions whereby the innocent have been beguiled to throw themselves into the arms of sin. In the holy institution of marriage, on the other hand, the law of selfsacrifice has become the bond by which society is held together in continuous unity through successive generations. It was not good for man to be alone. Even in his sinless state he was not a pure spirit of obedient selfless love. He had a self to get rid of. And as his understanding was to pass out of itself, and to shape itself into words, and to be reflected back from the understandings of others, in order to its own growth, and without a constant alternation of these processes of exhaling and inhaling would never rise out of its infancy (AL); so his love too, unless it could put itself forth in outward acts, and receive a reciprocation of such acts from the responsive love of another, would pine and wither away. Therefore is marriage to be indissoluble. The sacrifice of self once made is to be

made for life. The wayward carnalities of the will, which might lead us to revoke such a sacrifice, are to be cut off and cast away. Therefore too is a man to leave his father and mother, and to cleave to his wife, in order that the sacrifice of self, which in other relations can only be partial and for a time, may in this be lasting and complete, — so complete and lasting indeed, that this union is compared by St Paul to that between Christ and the Church. And as it is only by losing our lives that we save them, so he who has just been giving himself and all that he has away, feels, when he comes from the altar, that now for the first time in his life he is become truly rich.

In like manner it might be shewn that all our other feelings and passions, according to their intensity, exact and necessitate the sacrifice of self. Even the miser is regardless of self, so as to mortify every other affection, and to submit to the severest privations, for the sake of adding to his stores. He makes an idol of his gold, and sacrifices his heartsblood thereto. The vindictive man will sacrifice self, for the sake of glutting his vengeance. So will the hungerer after power or fame, for the object on which he has set his desire (AM). Every feeling, every passion, every impulse, every appetite of our nature is designed to draw us out of ourselves, to make us attach ourselves to something external, to train and exercise us in the field of selfsacrifice. What then is selfishness? It is the perpetual reference of everything to self, the ever-recurring intrusion of our own personality in the midst of every action and thought, the consequent incapacity of devoting ourselves earnestly and faithfully to anything, of delighting in anything, of deriving satisfaction from anything, the utter homelessness of heart. It is that state which the mythology

of ancient times symbolized in the ever-revolving wheel of Ixion, in the vessels of the Danaids wherein nothing will abide, in the restless stone of Sisyphus, in the hunger and thirst of Tantalus, ever craving, with the objects of his craving playing against his lips. It is that state in which, as has been powerfully exprest, "Man rushes from desire into enjoyment, And pines amid enjoyment for desire." For, as selfsacrifice is the condition without which nothing good can exist, so is it especially indispensable to happiness. We are endowed by nature with a capacity of receiving pleasure from all the objects around us: but selfishness instantly mars this delight: pour this poison into the cup; and it splits. All our objective feelings, even when misdirected, will confer some kind of enjoyment, so long as we follow their impulses with sincerity and unity of purpose. It is groundless to assert that the miser, — though in his case, as his name implies, the portion of pleasure may be the scantiest, — or that the ambitious man feels nothing but pain. So far as their hearts are abstracted from themselves, and concentrated upon the object of their aims, they have the key to happiness in their hands. Their misery is, that they view that object with a disquieting reference to themselves, — that they are not content with the pleasure and excitement which it affords them, but desire to possess it, struggle to make it their own, and thus doom themselves to the uneasiness, the dissatisfaction, the fretting sleepless cares, the contention and strife, which selfishness inevitably breeds. They who labour for themselves, are sure to be disappointed. Let them gain their object: when gained it becomes worthless. Whatever it may be, their cupidity always darts beyond it. "Vaulting ambition doth o'erleap itself, And falls on the

other side." They on the other hand, who labour for others in the spirit of selfsacrifice, are sure to succeed. For selfsacrifice has the unshakable assurance of charity, which never faileth. It is the brightest emanation of that godliness, which has not only the promise of the world to come, but also the promise of this world. He who devotes himself to making others happy, will infallibly do so: it may be, not in the very way he designed; but what does that matter? He attaches no worth to the act, as springing from himself, as the creature of his own understanding and will. He is equally blest in seeing the good, of which he is allowed to be the instrument. Without feeling either regret or shame at finding that the purposes of the Divine Mind are not in exact unison with his own, he is full of humble thankfulness to that Providence, which has so overruled his feeble and ill-directed exertions, as to bring good out of them, in spite of his own want of judgement to guide them. He who seeks after love in the spirit of selfsacrifice, will win love. He who seeks after glory in the spirit of selfsacrifice, will win glory. He who seeks after truth in the spirit of selfsacrifice, will win truth. At the same time he will have obtained a privileged immunity from all those anxieties and distractions and fears, from all those vain hopes and gnawing desires, and cankering jealousies and rancorous animosities, and from that undying worm of envy, of which selfishness is the sole and prolific parent. Misfortune cannot befall him. Evil cannot touch him. Death cannot harm him. He has already past through the gates of immortality. And what are all the moments of true and pure happiness that we enjoy here on earth, except fragments, precious fragments, of this "entire and perfect chrysolite?" It is when we are

borne away from ourselves, when we are lifted up out of the mire of sensuality, when we are disentangled from the groveling earthbound cares which ordinarily depress and gall us, — when we lose the consciousness of our own existence for a while in the entireness of our affection for another, in the absorbing sympathy with Nature, in worshiping the omnipresent majesty of Truth, — then it is, and on like occasions, that we are ravisht, that we are transported with joy. Our very language attests this, calling the fulness of joy a *trance*, an *ecstasy*, which *ravishes* us from ourselves, and *transports* us out of ourselves. Indeed if any one will reflect calmly on the character of his feelings at those seasons, which he looks back to as the happiest in his life, he will discern that they have always been seasons of self-oblivion: and further consideration would convince him that he has never had a moment's joy, a moment's pleasure, except when he has been acted upon by something that overpowered his self-consciousness, and superseded it.

The time will not allow me to trace the workings of our principle in man's intellectual nature, interesting as it might be to do so. I cannot conclude however, more especially considering the occasion on which we are assembled, without reminding you that man's understanding obeys the same all-pervading law. The selfish spirit, which has disordered his heart, has also crampt and darkened his intellect. For what is the main source of all errour? Is it not, man's proneness to judge of everything from himself, to anthropomorphize everything, to cloud his understanding, which he ought to hold up as a clear mirror to nature, with the vapour of his own breath, and, if I may borrow the terms of an obsolete philosophical creed, to

perceive nothing in the macrocosm, except what he sees in his microcosm; instead of seeking diligently in the microcosm for that which he beholds in the macrocosm? nay, to bring down everything to the standard of his own individual accidental opinions, of the opinions which chance and caprice have led him to take up? Is it not his presumption in assuming, without going through the pains of inquiring? his propensity to inform other things with himself, whereas he ought to inform himself with them? Is it not his inability to get quit of himself? that clogging imbecility, which withholds him from projecting his mind into the objects of his contemplation? Instead of passing away from himself, and winging his flight toward the true centre of knowledge, he takes his stand in himself as the centre, and so sees all things in wrong proportion, out of place, and awry.

On the other hand whatever has been truly excellent among the products of the human mind has sprung from the very same source of all good both in the natural and in the moral world, the spirit of selfsacrifice. Look for example at poetry. The might of the Imagination is manifested by its lanching forth from the petty creek, where the accidents of birth moored it, into the wide ocean of being, —by its going abroad into the world around, passing into whatever it meets with, animating it, and becoming one with it. This complete union and identification of the poet with his poem, — this suppression of his own individual insulated consciousness, with its narrownesses of thought and pettinesses of feeling, — is what we admire in the great masters of that which for this reason we justly call classical poetry, as representing that which is symbolical and universal, not that which is merely occasional and

peculiar. This gives them that majestic calmness, which still breathes upon us from the statues of their gods. This invests their works with that lucid transparent atmosphere, wherein every form stands out in perfect definiteness and distinctness, only beautified by the distance which idealizes it. This has delivered those works from the casualties of time and space, and has lifted them up like stars into the pure firmament of thought, so that they do not shine on one spot alone, nor fade like earthly flowers, but journey on from clime to clime, shedding the light of beauty on generation after generation. The same quality, amounting to a total extinction of his own selfish being, so that his spirit became a mighty organ through which Nature gave utterance to the full diapason of her notes, is what we wonder at in our own great dramatist, and is the groundwork of all his other powers: for it is only when purged of selfishness, that the intellect becomes fitted for receiving the inspirations of genius. Whereas the bane of poetry is selfishness and egotism, — the anxiety to produce an immediate effect, for the sake of rendering ourselves notorious, which leads us to turn away from the sober colouring of truth, and to deck out our works in whatever is gaudiest and most glaring, — the emulous comparison of ourselves with others, the contentious striving to surpass them, the straining after novelty, which we misname originality, the ostentatious panting after grandeur. Hereto of late years has been superadded the noisome protrusion of the poet's own weaknesses and vanities and vices. Indeed if, after a literary existence of five and twenty centuries, man has brought forth so scanty a stock of true living enduring poetry, the cause is the same which has rendered human nature so barren of greatness and goodness in all other

regions, — namely, that we are utterly selfridden, — self-ridden in will, so that we cannot will good, — selfridden in heart, so that we cannot feel good, — selfridden in understanding, so that we cannot think good. We look at things merely for the sake of seeing our own image in them; and our aim is to make them reflect that image in pompous pageantry and gigantic distortion. But he who will not part with his life, so that it shall pass from him into his work, — he who will not pass out of himself into his work, — will never produce anything that will have life in it. His works will never be substantive, but as it were suits of clothes to dress himself out in. Nay, as the poet must write in the spirit of selfsacrifice, so the reader of poetry, who would rightly feel and enjoy it, must in like manner pass out of himself into it. He must forget himself, and his own prejudices and predilections and associations, and give himself up to the work he is reading, and try to take his stand on the author's point of view. So that the obstacles which check the spread of true genial poetry,—of such poetry as carries us out of the purlieus of our own habitual notions into fresh fields of the imagination, — is still the spirit of selfishness, man's unwillingness to abandon his old inveterate preconceptions.

I can merely hint at the manner in which the same truths are exemplified in the history of the arts. Whether the artist has hewn out his ideas from the bowels of the earth, or has borrowed the pencil of the sun to express them, nothing in either art is truly admirable, unless we lose sight of the artist in his work, — unless he has supprest his own personal consciousness, and has past by a sort of transmigration into the person he was portraying, or the idea he was embodying. When our attention is called

aside from the beauty of the work to wonder at the skill of the artist, — when we thus hear the voice of the prompter, — we see that the whole is a trick, and turn away in disgust. For admiration is never given readily, except to those who do not challenge it: they who would take the first place, are bid go down to the last. Thus selfishness is the parent of that affectation, which is the besetting sin of modern art, and from which our artists find it almost impossible to disenthrall themselves. It is somewhat singular, that, when a work is free from such affectation, we call it *natural;* as it were from a lurking consciousness, — awakened by looking at that which is ideal, and which therefore should represent us as we ought to be,—that selfishness is not man's real and primary, but only his artificial secondary nature, a coating of smoke and dirt, the fumes and dregs of our souls, whereby the beauty and brightness of the original picture has been grievously defaced, and in most cases wellnigh destroyed. If any one asks, how it comes to pass, that works, entitled to the name of natural, were so much more abundant in ancient times than they have been in modern, an answer may perhaps be suggested by the consideration that the spirit of the individual merged in that of the citizen much more completely in ancient days than it has ever done since; and, with reference to the bulk of mankind, much more completely than it has ever done in the spirit of the Christian. Added to which, a national spirit always tends to foster whatever will highten the nation's outward glory; whereas Christianity, at least since the Reformation, has rather drawn men's minds away from that which is merely symbolical, and led them to seek for more immediate spiritual expressions of their ideas. While selfconsciousness has become more vivid in all, those

in whom it has been transfigured into a higher consciousness, have sought to manifest Christ by more direct methods than those of the arts. Before the Reformation however it was the Christian spirit, swaying and overruling the spirit of the natural man, that gave birth to whatever is most excellent in modern painting and architecture. In both, the aim of the artists was not to set forth their own glory, but the glory of God, according to their view of what would contribute to it: and so entirely had the selfish principle been subdued in the great architects who built our cathedrals, that they did not even take thought to have their names preserved (AN). They were content to live, and they do live, in their works. Hence we see that true genius necessarily implies a moral struggle and a victory, a struggle against the principle of selfishness, and a victory over it: and this affords a higher ground and sanction for the admiration which all nations have entertained for genius; while at the same time it helps to explain the irrepressible feeling, that there is a latent bond of union between genius and virtue.

Your own thoughts will already have suggested to you, that, whatever mischief the selfish spirit which is in man may have done in the other provinces of intellectual enterprise, in none has it been more injurious than in philosophy. If the nature of the human heart and mind be a problem which has hitherto eluded our grasp, — if we have hardly been able to catch more than a few dim and fleeting glimpses at the laws of spiritual being, — if there be nothing of which we know less than of ourselves, — this also is owing to our selfishness. Our spiritual immortal self is overlaid by our carnal mortal self, which rides it with the force of a nightmair, and, in room of serene and heavenly visions, calls up

the wild and morbid phantoms of a sleep without the rest of sleep, and a waking without the energy and freedom of being awake. In studying the history of philosophy, one can hardly help remarking, that the rise and fall of its successive systems have always gone along with corresponding changes in the character of the people that gave birth to them: so that, loudly as philosophers have boasted of having emancipated themselves from everything accidental, and risen into the region of pure contemplation, this boast has mostly been vain. Their systems have often been mere echoes, faint unsubstantial echoes of their own selfish being, and of the noises that were buzzing around them: and hence these systems, because their authors were not willing to lose their lives, in order to save them, have perisht one after the other. Often indeed the current philosophy is merely the reflexion of the reigning vice of an age: as has been the case with a great part of that which has assumed the name of philosophy in England during the last hundred years. Its chief aim has been to palliate and justify, to establish and diffuse that worship of Mammon, which Commerce has ever been fatally apt to propagate and promote.

Nor has the history of Science been undisfigured by the intrusions of selfishness; although here its influence may have been less widely pernicious; inasmuch as Science compells its votary to pass ever and anon out of himself, while the mighty presence of its objects charms and wins him to do so. Most of the errours however, which have checkt the progress of Science, the premature generalizations which have clogged it, the arbitrary hypotheses which have been set up in lieu of well-digested theories, the dogmas which have bid defiance to experience, have arisen

from man's unwillingness to acknowledge his ignorance, from his impetuosity to leap over the paling, instead of walking round patiently to the gate, — from his determination to erect an idol of his own, instead of persevering in the laborious search after the idea, — from his incapacity of devoting himself to the study of nature with an earnest, faithful, undivided allegiance. What indeed are all those causes of errour pointed out by that great light of our College, to whom on this day we are wont to take pride in offering our loyal admiration, — those idols of the tribe, and of the den, and of the marketplace, and of the theatre, — what are they but different modifications of selfishness, transfers to nature of that which belongs to man, irruptions into the region of truth by the usurping prejudices of the individual, and of the nation, and of the sect? That new instrument of knowledge, which traced the path and laid down the laws of scientific discovery, and of which, whatever its direct influence may have been, we may confidently say, that the researches of subsequent natural philosophers have led to valuable and stable conclusions, in proportion as they have accorded with its principles, — that volume, which, it is our glory, issued from a mind bred within these walls, and fed with the milk of knowledge by this our nursing mother, — that volume is throughout a doctrine of intellectual humility and selfsacrifice (AO). It teaches us that the only way to rule over Nature is to obey her, that, in order to legislate for her, we must faithfully study her laws. And that other brightest star in our banner, that volume in which these laws are set forth, is an illustration and verification of this truth. If Nature unveiled herself to the eyes of Newton, it was in return for the devotion and selfsacrifice with which he had wooed and served her. Let me remind

you of his own meek and magnanimous declaration. "One day (says his biographer) when one of his friends had said some handsome things of his extraordinary talents, Sir Isaac, in an easy and unaffected way, assured him that for his own part he was sensible that whatever he had done worth notice was owing to a patience of thought, rather than any extraordinary sagacity which he was endowed with above other men. I keep the subject constantly before me, and wait till the first dawnings open by little and little, into a full and clear light" (AP). It would be easy to pursue this subject, and to accumulate instances in proof that even in science selfsacrifice is indispensable to excellence. But on the present occasion this would be needless. For us it is enough, that Bacon has taught, and that Newton has shewn that it is so.

My chief object in this sermon has been to prove, that the great Christian paradox, — *that he who shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and that he who shall lose his life shall preserve it*, — is only a paradox to the blindness of the carnal understanding; — that it is not at variance, but in harmony with the processes of Nature in her manifold systems; —that its truth is recognized by all our feelings, and confirmed by the operations of our minds. After this discussion, it cannot be necessary to shew that the same law prevails throughout the moral world. For here it has ever been acknowledged by common consent. A few sophists alone, — whether deluded by their own subtilties, or from a wish to justify the evil in their own hearts, by setting it up as the ruling principle of every heart, — have maintained, in contradiction to the voice of mankind, that morality is nothing else than a potentiated selfishness: and the sole argument, on the strength of which their assertion has

gained plausibility and currency, has been the assumption that selfishness is the universal law of nature, and that every creature exists wholly and solely for itself. If therefore we can demolish that assumption, if we can shew its utter fallacy, we may return with confidence to the good old simple creed, that every moral act, as such, is more or less an act of selfsacrifice, and that its moral dignity and worth is in proportion to the degree of selfsacrifice implied in it. True, we often hear it urged, that honesty is the best policy: but who would esteem a man honest, if he were merely honest out of policy? who would not feel that such a man might slip at any moment from his noose? Motives of this kind are urged on the dishonest, who alone can be influenced by them, with the view of convincing them how mistaken they are, according to their own notions of that which is desirable,—in order to burst the net which their understandings have spun round their hearts,—and in the hope that, when they have been led to seek honesty from lower inducements, they may learn to love it from higher. Every moral act implies the submission of the will to a law, which is not the spontaneous form and rule whereby the will would determine its operation, but against which in the first instance our selfwill always revolts. It implies a victory greater or less over our carnal impulses and appetites. Accordingly it must be an act of selfsacrifice; though in time the selfsacrifice may become habitual and easy. This is the principle even of human ethics. But in a far higher degree is it the principle of Christian ethics. For in human morality, through the imbecility of our nature, selfishness is never wholly exstirpated. After having been driven out in its vulgar coarseness, it will intrude in a more refined form: and too often has human

virtue been tainted with the desire of self-glorification. The hero of heathen morality was ambitious of displaying the strength of his will in subduing itself. This however was not the principle of his virtue, but its corruption: and this is why the virtues of the heathens in some measure deserve the name of splendid vices. But in Christian morals there is no such compromise. Our will is not to bow to itself, but to the absolute will of God. The graces of the Christian character are far removed from all manner of self-exaltation, which immediately destroys them. They are meekness, patience, forbearance, longsuffering, gentleness, humility. We do not seek our highest rule in our Reason: but our Reason bends to Faith. We do not conquer our carnal nature by our own strength, but by the grace of God: and this grace can only be obtained, when, casting away all selfreliance, we seek it by humble and earnest prayer: which is therefore the highest act man can perform, because it is the act of the most complete selfsacrifice (AQ). Our aim should be to put on the mind of Him, *who, being in the form of God, made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and humbled Himself unto the death of the cross: wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name, that at His name every knee shall bow, in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.* Thus by His own example did He prove to us, that he who loses his life shall preserve it; and that, as God is glorified in his death, his renewed life shall be taken up into the eternal glory of God.

On these however, the highest and grandest parts of our great theme, I cannot dwell. The time warns me to

conclude. We have seen that through every order of beings, in things inanimate and things animate, in the natural and in the spiritual world, in earth and in heaven, the law of selfsacrifice prevails. Everywhere the birth of the spiritual requires the death of the carnal. Everywhere the husk must drop away, in order that the germ may spring out of it. Everywhere, according to our Lord's declaration, that which would save its life loses it, and that which loses its life preserves it. And the highest glory of the highest life is to be offered up a living sacrifice to God for the sake of our brethren. This is the principle of life, which circulates through the universe, and whereby all things minister to each other, the lowest to the highest, the highest to the lowest. This is the golden chain of love, whereby the whole creation is bound to the throne of the Creator. One way or other our life must be lost; unwillingly . . . and we lose it for ever; willingly . . . and we gain it for ever. One way or other we must burn; with that earthly fire, which pours forth smoke, and utterly destroys its prey; or with that heavenly fire, which pours forth light, and burns everlastingly, as seen by Moses in the bush, illumining that wherein it burns, and replenishing it evermore from the inexhaustible fountains of Love. The two flames are standing before you: the choice is still open to you: you must cast yourselves into the one; or the other will devour you. Choose speedily; choose resolutely; and may the Holy Spirit of God direct your choice, and uphold your resolution!

SERMON IX:

THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST:

PREACHT IN TRINITY COLLEGE CHAPEL,
ON WHITSUNDAY 1832.

Matthew xii. 31, 32.

Wherefore I say to you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven to men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.

HARDLY any passage in the New Testament has given rise to so much discussion as these words. Hardly any passage has been interpreted so variously and discordantly, or been made the ground of so many speculative inferences. Yet the attention and curiosity which the text has excited, have been no way beyond its deep and manifest importance. The very manner in which the words are introduced and repeated, gives them a peculiar emphasis and solemnity: a lesson thus enforced, it is plain, must be of more than ordinary moment. And even if we had no personal concern in it, but were merely looking on as spectators of the transactions of another world, we could not but be awestruck by such an appalling denunciation. The mind recoils from the contemplation of everlasting, irremediable, hopeless woe: it sinks

beneath the weight of such a thought. Let any ray of comfort, however faint and distant, glimmer through the darkness; and the prospect becomes supportable. It seems as though the intensity of the suffering be comparatively immaterial, provided it is to have an end. Thus our very feelings acknowledge in a manner that no finite quantity, however vast, bears any proportion to the infinite.

The words of the text embrace a twofold declaration; and even the narrower of the two is of all but infinite capacity. They stand, as it were, between heaven and hell, and lay open both the one and the other to our thoughts. For our Saviour did not come to destroy, but to give life. He never speaks of destruction, except to draw us away from it. When He terrifies, it is in order that He may bless. His call to repentance was a call to the kingdom of heaven. On the one hand the text proclaims the boundless reach of mercy: on the other hand it warns us that there is a sin so heinous as to transcend the reach of mercy, although boundless. *All manner of sin and blasphemy*, we are told, *shall be forgiven to men.* In these words it has been attempted to draw a specific distinction between *sin* and *blasphemy*, as though sin meant an offense against man, blasphemy an offense against God. But such a distinction would be unscriptural: every sin, according to the scriptural view, is a sin against God; and this constitutes its chief sinfulness. He gave the law, which sin breaks. Blasphemy too is plainly a branch of sin, not a thing contradistinguishable from it; though mentioned in this passage, along with the generic term which embraces it, because the particular sin, which gave occasion to the declaration in the text, was a sin of

blasphemy: and because a kind of blasphemy is the sin, which is here declared to be excluded from forgiveness. *All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men;* or rather, *may be forgiven*, may obtain forgiveness; that is to say, on the use of the appropriate means for purifying and sanctifying the heart, through faith in Him, who came to save us from our sins. *But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven to men.* He who is guilty of that sin must remain for ever an outcast from the presence, from the grace, from the love of God. To him alone "hope never comes, That comes to all." His sin is unto death, deadly; and every vital germ withers within him.

Such being the terrific character of the sin, which is here termed blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, it must needs concern us deeply, to inquire what that sin is, which alone is excluded from all possibility of mercy. So may we be watchful to shrink from whatever might lure us within its poisonous contagion, and to stifle every movement that might bear the heart toward it. That this can be ascertained, sufficiently for all practical and moral purposes, we may be confident; not only because the contrary supposition would be inconsistent with every conception that we can form of justice; but also because the whole moral code of the Gospel is plain and broad and clear and simple, because its letters are of light, and are graven on the forehead of the day. At the same time we may discern, why those who have tried to give a precise definition of the sin against the Holy Ghost, and to determine what specific act constitutes it, should have been much puzzled and perplext; so that this question has been a matter of lively controversy from the first ages of the

Church down to the present (AR). For the law of the Gospel, being designed to apply to every form and condition of humanity, never stops short at the outward act, either in what it commands or forbids, but goes straight to the heart, which is the only thing it cares for, and which alone gives the outward act its worth. Herein its procedure is the reverse of that followed by human law. Even when, for the sake of illustration, or with reference to a particular occasion, its prohibitions are directed against outward acts, the outward acts are not condemned for their own sake, or for the sake of any external mischief that may spring from them, but as manifesting and issuing from the evil principle in the heart; and the object of the prohibition is to root out this evil principle, not to cut it down, or merely clip off the blossoms. In fact it is evidently impossible to lay down definitively what particular acts will prove a person to have been guilty of the irremissible sin; seeing that the sinfulness of an act does not lie in the act itself, but in the agent, and varies according to his knowledge, his motives, and his intention. And even had this not been so, we may perceive a twofold reason why our Lord, in His mercy, should have left this sin involved in obscurity; on the one hand lest any person, committing the particular act, to which, from the waywardness of our nature, the very prohibition might with many have proved a temptation, should abandon himself to absolute despair; and on the other hand lest those, who see a brother committing such an act, should rashly consign him to perdition. As it is, both these sins, — the sin of despairing of God's mercy, and the sin of dooming a brother to damnation, — have been lamentably common in Christendom: and doubtless they would have been much more frequent,

had there been any single act that men could have fastened on as the irremissible sin.

Nevertheless it is certain that our Saviour's words were not spoken to the winds. It is certain that there must be a sin, against which He purpost to warn His hearers; and that here, as ever, His words bear, not only on His immediate hearers, but on all after generations. For it is scarcely necessary to pause, in order to refute a notion entertained by some modern expositors, that the sin against the Holy Ghost, spoken of in the text, is a sin which could only be committed by the contemporaries of the Saviour. Among the theologians, who, having framed no conception of anything in God higher than bare naked power, have narrowed the whole evidence of Christianity to the physical miracles wrought by its Author, some have been fain to persuade themselves that the sin against the Holy Ghost lay wholly in the rejection of this evidence, and that none could be guilty of it except those who saw the miracles performed with their own eyes (AS). Yet even on their own premisses, as the evidence of our Lord's miracles ought according to them to be no less compulsory at this day, than at the moment when they were wrought, it is hard to understand how the sin of rejecting that evidence should have totally changed its nature, — how it should be so much less sinful in us than in the Jews, although we have those miracles confirmed by all the spiritual miracles which the Holy Ghost has accomplisht in nations as well as individuals from the day of Pentecost downward; and although we behold them in the light which the history of the Church has shed on the meaning and purpose of its Founder. Besides, what in such case would be the difference between speaking against the Son of Man, which

shall be forgiven, and speaking against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven? When our Lord calls Himself the Son of Man, it is not with an exclusive reference to His humanity, stript, as this notion would imply, even of the power of working miracles. This passage itself proves that the sin of speaking against the Son of Man must be something different from that of speaking against other men: it is singled out as one of the greatest of sins, which notwithstanding may be forgiven. And it is the Son of Man, who, we are told, shall come in His glory, with all the holy angels, and shall sit upon the throne of His glory: the Son of Man is our King and our Judge. He is the Messiah, approved to be such by the signs and wonders which He wrought. Surely too the whole Jewish people, who were not convinced by our Lord's miracles, were not one and all guilty of the irremissible sin. They for whom He prayed on the cross, — they of whom He declared that they knew not what they did, — cannot have been guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost. Indeed, as the uniform tenour of the New Testament establishes that the heinousness of a sin increases with the light in the face of which it is committed, there is far more of truth in the doctrine said to have been maintained in the first ages of the Church by the Novatians, and in after time held by the early Lutheran divines, that the sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be committed except by Christians, — by those who have received the Holy Ghost at their baptism, and who live, beneath the light of Christianity, in open defiance of Christ (AT). The former interpretation belongs to that milk-and-water religion, which was so fashionable in the last century, when it was too much the practice to hide whatever is grave and solemn and awful in the Gospel, for fear

of putting people in a fright, and to cover it over with a mask of inanimate theophilanthropy. As this system sprang out of debility, debility of intellect, and debility of feeling, its offspring was like its parents. Thus the head grew to think, as the heart wisht; and the heart lost the power of aspiring beyond what the head set before it. In all ages too have Christians been overfond of shifting the burthen, at least of their heaviest sins, from their own shoulders on those of the Jews; in spite of the Apostle's warning, that the Son of God may still be crucified afresh. It soothes and flatters our selfconceit, to fancy that we cannot be so bad as they were: and we are slow to confess that, unless we are better, we must be far worse.

Neither the time, nor place, will allow me to examine the various hypotheses which have been brought forward concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost. Nor shall I attempt to suggest any new explanation, or any mode of reconciling the old ones. This would require a discussion too elaborate and critical for the pulpit. All I can aim at doing is to look at a single aspect of it. The commentators who would convert this sin into a mere matter of history, a kind of privilege peculiar to the Jews, are not sufficiently attentive to the general bearing of the argument in the passage from which the text is taken, where, as is mostly the case in the New Testament, the main stress is laid on the beneficent character of our Saviour's miracles. The Pharisees, unable to deny the power which He had just manifested by healing a blind and dumb demoniac, hardened their hearts against the inference, which they ought to have drawn from the manifestation of such power for such a purpose, and exclaimed, elated no doubt by the ingenuity of their conceit, that the power by

which the devil had been cast out, was derived from the prince of the devils. Hereupon our Lord replied, with His wonted unanswerable simplicity and force, that no kingdom or city or house, if divided against itself, can stand, and that in like manner, if Satan were divided against himself, his kingdom could not stand. Then, appealing to their judgement in other cases, where it was not warpt by their passions, that so they might feel themselves condemned by their own voice, He asks them, *If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?* These words confirm, that the naked act itself could not be a full proof that He who performed it was the Son of God; inasmuch as it could be performed by the children of the Jews: the rejection of that proof therefore could not by itself be the sin against the Holy Ghost. The argument in the other verses which precede the text, and in the five which follow it, is to the same effect,—that evil breeds evil, and good good, and that, as the fruit is, such is the tree. Hence it may reasonably be concluded, that the peculiar feature in the conduct of the Pharisees, which moved our Lord to utter his warning with regard to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, as distinguisht from blasphemy against the Son of Man, and from all other blasphemy and sin, was their ascribing the good which He wrought, by a marvellous power too palpable to be denied, to an evil principle.

Now is this a sin into which it is wholly impossible for any of us to fall? Is it not rather a sin on the brink of which many in all ages have been perpetually tottering, while their malignant passions have been dragging down their vacillating understanding into it? Has it not in all ages been the last resource of hatred, when baffled and

incenst by the too evident virtues of its adversary, to dispute their genuineness, to deny their purity, and to attempt to sully that purity with its own venomous slime? Nay, is it not a favorite employment with the acute, the subtile, with those who plume themselves on what they call their knowledge of human nature and of the world,—is it not an exercise of their ingenuity in which they take pride and delight, — to strip off the feathers, and scrape off the hues from whatever is bright and beautiful, and out of the dark caverns of their own hearts to conjure forth all the imaginable bad motives, by which a man may inveigle himself into performing a beneficent or heroic action? Are there not many who in this manner betray their affinity to the great Accuser? many vain of imitating the example of him who askt, *Does Job fear God for nought?*

I am far from meaning to assert that the intellectual and moral habits referred to amount to the sin against the Holy Ghost in all its enormity and deadliness. Indeed it is by no means certain that the Pharisees, whose blasphemy against our Lord's miracle was the occasion of His declaring the soul-destroying nature of that sin, were themselves irredeemably involved in it. He does not pronounce them to be so: and His declaration may have been a warning addrest to them, as well as to all other men. But as their blasphemy betokened that frame of heart and mind, through which men are liable to fall into the sin against the Holy Ghost, so the habits just spoken of are of a like nature. They too are akin to that sin: they lead to it: and if we indulge and foster them, unless we are withheld by God's grace from slipping into the snares which they lay for us, they will infallibly plunge us into it. Sin is much too crafty and subtile to begin with an open declaration of war,

whereby it might rouse us to arm ourselves for resisting its attacks. Its first aggressions are silent: its first inroads are stealthy. It lies in ambush for us: it puts us off our guard by holding up false colours: it undermines us secretly and unobservedly, and then on a sudden starts forth in possession of the heart of the fortress. The arts which Sin has taught to her favorite child, Death, are those the success of which she has found verified by her own continual experience. And how does Death win his way through the world, stalking from house to house, and from city to city, and from nation to nation? He does not walk abroad in his own naked, spectral, worm-eaten, woe-begone hideousness. He arrays himself in glory: he tricks himself out with pleasure: he embodies himself in gain: vain glory indeed, false pleasure, perishable gain! but the eyes of his victims are unable to distinguish the phantom from the reality. Both Death and Sin too, in the forms which they assume, adapt themselves to the characters and dispositions of those on whom they design to prey. And as the strength of man, when it deems itself to be strength, is closely allied to weakness, — while the weakness of man, if rightly conscious that it is weakness, may not be far removed from strength, — these his mortal enemies, as if in mockery of his pride, direct their main attack against the very point in which he conceives himself to be most invulnerable. To those who boast of their strength or of their beauty, their strength or beauty becomes a snare. To those who fondle their affections, their affections become a snare. To those who pride themselves on their understanding, their understanding becomes a snare. They get entangled and bewildered in the mazes of their own sophistries. They sharpen the edge of their intellect,

so that it eats away its sheath. By degrees it thrusts itself through the rich and beauteous clothing with which Nature has invested it, until it lifts up its head in the face of heaven, bare and barren and joyless, where no dew springs from it, no rain can fertilize it, and the sun shines upon it in vain.

The intellectual faculties with which we have been endowed, are indeed a precious and bounteous gift of God. They are among the brightest and noblest jewels in that crown of glory and worship, which He has bestowed on the first of His earthly creatures: and greatly does it behove us to render Him continual thanks for them, in word, and likewise in deed, by employing them diligently and faithfully in His service, in nourishing our souls by the contemplation of His infinite goodness, and in declaring and setting forth that goodness to others. But, like everything else in the universe, they too must remain submissively in the rank and station assigned to them, where they may work much good, but which they cannot quit without breeding mischief and ruin, in proportion to the extent of their usurpation. For it is a primary law of being, that nothing can flourish and reach its perfection, except in co-ordination and fellowship and harmony with other things, ministering to them, and being ministered to by them. If we strive to rise above the law, we by that very act cast ourselves beneath the law: whence every despot is necessarily a slave, his own slave, and the slave of those over whom he tyrannizes, held in the accursed bondage of suspicion and jealousy and fear and hatred. No tree will thrive, without the neighbourhood of other trees, to shelter it from the violence of the elements, and to convert what would otherwise warp and stunt it, into the means of

its growth. Nor is our prosperity impeded, but promoted by the prosperity of those around us, whether in the commerce of the fruits of the earth, or of thoughts. So blind and foolish and self-debasing is envy, no mind can be truly healthy and vigorous, without the society and familiar converse of the healthy and vigorous-minded. In like manner the several members of our own being ought to stand in a relation of friendly interchange one with another. Unless they all cooperate harmoniously, unless they have all free room and free play, and are allowed and encouraged to develope themselves according to their importance, the mechanism of our nature will be deranged: and the very faculty which encroaches the most upon the others, will often be the greatest sufferer: for every enormity is a deformity. What becomes of our feelings, if they have not the light of the understanding to guide them, and conscience to controll and rein them in? They are sure to go astray, and to run riot: they falter beneath their own causeless intensity: they trip and stumble from the speed of their course: they plunge unawares into a quagmire which swallows them up: they sicken from the very excess of gratification. Nor is the understanding, though set to be the counsellor and guide of our other powers, less wayward, when left to itself, or less capricious, or less apt to err. As its tendency is to roll on in whatsoever direction it may take, when any impulse causes it to diverge from the right line of truth, it rushes forward, unless some counteracting force drive it back, until it gets utterly bewildered, and misconceives, misjudges, perplexes, perverts, and confounds everything. Indeed there is no more complete, no more calamitous delusion, than that the understanding is sufficient to itself. It can mix and combine

and dress up and manufacture whatever materials are set before it: but the materials must be supplied to it from without, from our other faculties, from one or other of those inlets of knowledge which God has opened for His creatures. This in the first instance we all know and feel: in childhood every mind is receptive. But as we advance in years, the Understanding, in those in whom it is lively, takes such delight in its own activity, that it is prone to forget its dependence on external sources of knowledge. It feeds on its own smoke, and fancies that it is self-fueled. It raises scaffoldings, and calls them houses. It chains together propositions, and calls them systems. It floods the country round, and deems that it is flowing in its proper bed. It analyses and anatomizes everything, maintains that the dregs are the elements, that the carcase is the body, and denies that there is any life, except what it sees in the region of death.

This disease of an enlargement of the Understanding is one, to which nations, after they have past their prime, have ever been liable; and which then can scarcely be prevented, except by regular practical social and moral activity. Such a state of mind is not favorable even to knowledge. For the love of exercising its own supremacy is much stronger in the Understanding, than the love of truth. If nations in their youth are apt to err on the side of credulity, they are no less apt to err in their decline on the side of incredulity; which after all is only credulity saying No, instead of saying Yes. In its selfsufficient pride, the Understanding will close its ears against those highest truths, which come to it out of the region of Faith, the truths of the moral and spiritual world. Finding nothing answerable to them among its own forms, or among the maxims

which it has abstracted from the surface of life, it lays down that they are dreams, that they are fictions, that they are lies. It will deny morality, and excuse and justify all manner of immorality, taking delight in magnifying itself by shewing its superiority to the prejudices of former ages, and pronouncing that nothing is good or evil, except by reason of the pleasure or pain it produces. Such doctrines, it is notorious, have ever gained currency in the decrepitude of nations. They spring up plentifully under the despotism of the Understanding; which, having rejected all higher principles, becomes more and more a voluptuary; until at length it perishes, like Sardanapalus, by an inverted martyrdom, on a pile in which the instruments of its pleasures become the fuel to consume it.

Thus ages of great moral depravity have not seldom been remarkable for intellectual dexterity and astuteness. The highest powers of the mind indeed, which are more closely akin to our moral nature, and cannot flourish apart from it, will pine and wither. There will be no cherubic wisdom; for that can never be divorced from seraphic love. But the wisdom of the serpent may abound; for that lays its eggs in the mud. In individuals such a combination has too often been found. Our great dramatic poet has exhibited more than one example of this terrific union, where the Spirit of Evil is brooding over the chaotic elements of hell. And does it not almost seem as though this impregnation of the nethermost abyss had been actually realized upon earth, if we call to mind who was the Emperor of the world, and what were the abominations of Capreae, when the King of kings and Lord of lords was nailed as a criminal to the cross of shame? Indeed, as errours mostly enter the mind by pairs, like the unclean

beasts into the ark, so, while on the one hand we often see an idolatrous worship of intellect, a notion that nothing can be admirable, except what is intellectually eminent, and that whatever has this might must be right, — a delusion which in these days has become most mischievously prevalent, — on the other hand there is a vulgar belief in a natural connexion between intellectual superiority and moral perversity. The cleverest fellows, the saying goes, are always the greatest rogues. Now in this place we have peculiar opportunities of knowing how utterly false this opinion is. All such among you, I feel persuaded, as have been conversant with the youths who come to receive the culture of their minds from this university, will agree in declaring that those who have been the most highly gifted intellectually, have, generally speaking, been among the nobler, finer, more generous spirits. Nay, the parable seems almost to imply this. He who has five talents gains five more, and is commended by his lord. It is he that had only one talent, who proves the wicked and slothful servant. I should be most loth to strain this remark: under the operation of the Gospel, we know, every valley shall be exalted: still it may be allowable to observe that the annals of our gaols and courts of justice would lead us to a like conclusion. Assuredly too there is an affinity, an alliance, though, alas! not an indissoluble one, between genius and virtue. High principles strengthen and clarify the mind, calm it, give it selfpossession and energy, give it a right direction and a stedfast purpose, give it a simple and earnest love of truth, set its aim upon worthy objects, and spur it on to pursue them. Hence, if we take the case of two persons starting with equal talents, the righterminded will in a few years have far outstript the other: and this

will hold, at least in some measure, if carried back to the very first dawn of the understanding. It is true, history presents a number of fearful instances to the contrary, to one of which I have just alluded. But even in history, I think, if we look at men with reference to human virtue, the majority of the greatest intellects will be found among the noblerminded. At the same time it must be remembered, that in history the relative proportion will differ from that in ordinary life; because the men who raise themselves to sway by the strength of their minds, have often by that very act entered into a league with evil; and because great intellectual powers are liable to be assailed by mightier blasts of temptation, more especially when standing on high, and rock with a wider more destructive sweep. Witness those awful examples, which Scripture sets before us, of Sin casting down the mighty from their seat, David and his wise son.

If we wish to ascertain the relation which the intellect of man bears to Christian truth, other considerations must be taken into account. Infidels make their boast of the multitude of strong minds that have ranged themselves under their banner. More especially has this been the case in those countries, where thought has been unduly fettered, and where men have been bid to bow down to the arbitrary dictates of an assumed infallibility. Elsewhere we on the whole find manifold confirmation of Bacon's saying, that Philosophy, when we sip it, leads us away from God; when we drink deep, brings us back to Him. The history of speculation establishes the truth of this, so far as regards mere theism. Christianity on the other hand, we acknowledge, is beset by peculiar difficulties, which men of aspiring

and piercing minds will feel more keenly than others. Our Saviour Himself declares this, when He gives thanks, that the mysteries of His kingdom are hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes. And assuredly it is no less hard for the rich in worldly wisdom, than for the rich in money, to enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is difficult for the camel to enter in; still more so, when he is laden with merchandise; most of all, when the whole is surmounted and surrounded by swollen bladders of vanity. Yet here too we find that *with God all things are possible.* Every mountain and hill must indeed be laid low: but when they are so, they too shall be a highway for our God. And He who cast down Saul, and warned him how hard it is to kick against the pricks, has often in like manner revealed Himself to those who have been brought to feel that wisdom also, when afar from Him, is vanity and vexation of spirit.

I have said thus much about sins of the Understanding, because the peculiar character of the sin against the Holy Ghost seems to be, that it is a sin in which the whole man is working together in the toils of evil, in which the heart is blinding the head, and the head is hardening the heart, and both are joining in stifling and strangling the conscience. In the text we find mention of several stages in the downward course of wickedness. First there is the stage described simply as that of sin. This is a word of the widest range, and comprehends the whole brood of hell: but when used distinctively, as in this passage, it may be taken to apply more especially to the violation of the moral law. Then there is the stage of blasphemy, which seems to refer mainly to outbreaks of profaneness and impiety aimed openly and directly against God. These

sins, we are told, may be forgiven. The heart may be moved by God's grace to repent of them, and to turn away from them, and seek health from Him who came to heal His people from their sins. In religious biographies we frequently find that men, who in their latter days have been exemplary for holiness, had yet done much in their youth to swell the original corruption of their nature. When reading such biographies indeed, we should bear in mind that they, whose sight has been purged by gazing at the Sun of Righteousness, become, as it were, armed with a solar microscope, and discern warring and devouring monsters, where the naked eye sees a simple drop of water. Doubtless too mischief has been done by those who have spoken too inconsiderately of Christ's free grace, without duly warning their hearers how continued indulgence in sin thwarts and obstructs it. At the same time we know that a way has been opened even for the publicans and the harlots to enter into the kingdom of God: and far must that heart be from the kingdom of God, which does not give thanks, which does not feel that it has the deepest motives for giving thanks, that this is so.

The next stage of sin mentioned in the text is that in which a person speaks against the Son of Man; that is to say, being blinded by the prejudices of his education and of his carnal nature, denies Christ's Godhead, rejects His proffered mercy, and refuses to accept, or, it may be, even derides His atonement. This sin likewise, we are told, may be forgiven: and they who have ever felt the cracking of doubt in their hearts, — they who have ever felt the ground give way, when they tried in their own strength to plant their foot firmly upon it, — they who have felt how hard it is for a man, when he has devoted his soul to any

lower object of honorable admiration, to tear it away from thence, and lift it up to the highest, — all such will give God thanks that even the blasphemy against His Incarnate Son, as that Son in His infinite mercy has Himself declared, may be forgiven. And here again our Lord's declaration has been confirmed by the history of His Church. For on whom did the eyes of holy Stephen fall, as he knelt down, and uttered his last prayer, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge?* Did they not rest on a young man standing by, looking in stern and thoughtful wonder at the new spirit of dauntless courage, mixt with such meekness and love, by which whatever he most revered was assailed, — and yet consenting to his death? That young man in the first instance was only the more incenst by this spectacle, which flasht with such a startling light across his soul, to make havock of the Church, and to breathe out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. But would it not have gladdened the spirit of the blessed martyr, even in the presence of God, if he had been allowed to look down upon earth, after thirty of its years had rolled over it, and to see that same young man standing before Agrippa, confessing the Lord whom he had persecuted? Would he not have found fresh cause for giving glory to God in the highest, if he had heard that this same young man had been Christ's chosen servant for bringing the nations to the obedience of faith, — that he had gone from city to city, and from country to country, conquering with the sword of the Spirit? Others too have there been, even among those whom Christ has most honoured, who yet in earlier times had been hurried by blind zeal into speaking against the Son of Man. Thus this sin, like the former, may be, and has been forgiven.

It does not harden the heart against the possibility of repentance, and therefore does not bar it out from forgiveness. Most infatuated however would any one be, if, presuming on our Lord's gracious promise, he were to persist recklessly in this sin. Such a person would not be far from the sin against the Holy Ghost.

This is the last stage of sin; when we sin against God, not as the Father, as the Maker and Lawgiver of the world, by transgressing His ordinances through the weakness and waywardness of our nature, — in doing which we may still acknowledge their obligatoriness and their sanctity in our hearts; when we sin against God, not as the Son, as the Saviour and Redeemer of the world, by denying His incarnate deity, and the divine authority of His Church; but when we sin against God, as the Holy Ghost and Sanctifier, the Author of every good gift, the Inspirer of every pure feeling, the Source of all consolation, of all charity, of all holiness. There may be much of evil in man; and yet the germs of good may not be wholly extinguisht. The heart may still feel some instinctive relentings, some secret reproaches, some pangs of remorse, some aspirations after a better state, some touches of sympathy with our brethren, some shrinking from the infliction of pain, from injustice, from wrong, from falsehood, from slander. So long as it retains any feeling for the majesty of goodness, for the beauty of lovingkindness, for the sacred purity of truth, it is not irretrievably lost. But when our evil passions have enlisted the understanding in their service, and this ready menial has come forward, and exerted its subtilty in confounding and upsetting the landmarks of our moral nature, in distorting and effacing the distinctions between truth and falsehood,

between right and wrong, between good and evil, then the light of the understanding becomes darkness, and the eye loses the power of perceiving what it sees, and the ear loses the power of discerning what it hears, and the soul sets up an idol that it has dug out of the bowels of Sin, and cries, *Evil, be thou my good!* He who has reacht this consummation of sin, has given himself up bound heart and mind to Satan: and for him it is hard to see how there can be any repentance, any forgiveness, either in this world, or in the world to come.

Such appears to have been the character of the sin committed by the Pharisees; such, I mean, in kind. How far it may have fallen short of the dismal abyss, where every vital germ in the soul is rotted, and every fibre eaten away by the gnawing poison of falsehood, He alone could know, who reads the thoughts of the heart. What appears on the face of the story is, that, being determined not to acknowledge the power of goodness in Him whom they would not allow to be the promist Messiah, they beguiled their hearts and belied their consciences, by declaring that the power, through which He subdued evil, was derived from the prince of evil himself. They ascribed the works of infinite goodness to infinite wickedness. Now this, it is true, is a sin which we cannot commit in all its heinous atrocity. Thanks to our situation and circumstances, we are preserved from falling into this desperate folly. Such is the stainless purity of our Lord's character, such a light is spread around Him by His unweariable beneficence, and by that meekness which nothing could provoke or disturb, that hardly any among the more recent enemies of Christianity have been reckless enough to utter any thing like slander against Him: or, if such an attempt

has been made, its own infamy has choked it. But there are divers shades of the same sin, less dark indeed, but sufficiently dark to obscure our moral perceptions, to which in these days we are perhaps peculiarly liable. Some men, dealers in universal scepticism, vain of their freedom from vulgar prejudice and errour, but tainted, after the manner of sceptics, with a clinging prejudice in favour of the negative side in every question, are fond of throwing out sneering doubts as to the reality of every amiable and honorable feeling, and will rake in the mire for the seeds of every good action, which at length, when unable to find those seeds, they pronounce to be the offspring of the mire itself. Possibly they may regard this as a harmless exercise of speculative ingenuity. But let them beware. Our habitual thoughts will in time shape and mould our feelings: and he who is wont theoretically to deny the possibility of goodness, is too likely to lose all practical faith in it. If there be any relics of better feelings in his heart, he will root them up as idle gaudy weeds in the field of prudential wisdom. In truth it would seem as though he could hardly deny the possibility of such feelings in others, until they are wellnigh extinct within his own bosom. Besides, as we are to shew forth our love of God by our love to our brethren, are we not in like manner to shew forth our faith in God by our faith in our brethren? Else what hope can there be, where there is no faith for it to rest on? what love can there be, where there is no faith to uphold it? Or how can any one labour heartily for those, from whom no labour can elicit any valuable result? Nay, would the Son of God, infinite as His mercy is, have come down to save a race of beings, whom nothing could save from the perdition of selfish hollowness and hypocrisy?

Would it not have been a greater act of mercy in the Almighty Father, to send a second flood over the earth, and to sweep away the heartless hearts and the soulless souls of mankind? Let us beware, I repeat, of these sceptical views of human nature. They may lure a man, ere he perceives it, into the sin against the Holy Ghost. The natural fruit of such a creed has been seen in France. When a man despises his fellowcreatures, his feet may well be swift to shed blood (AU).

Others, a far greater number, are too readily led by the rancour of party-spirit to distort all the actions of their opponents, and to hunt after base and sordid motives for what to outward view appears honorable and praiseworthy. They degrade their understanding into the slavish pamperer of their malignant passions, and harden their hearts, and embitter all their feelings, by persuading themselves that their enemies are utterly depraved. It is in ages of violent contention, when political and moral and religious principles are arrayed in opposition to each other, that such a temper of mind is most commonly found, and produces the greatest mischief. Even they who by nature were endowed with noble and not ungentle spirits, have been turned into fierce partisans, and into cruel and bigoted persecutors, when they have once blotted out the line which separates right from wrong, and have deceived themselves into believing that whatever they themselves can do must be justifiable by reason of their cause, while whatever their adversaries can do must be condemnable. In the present state of England there are many things, which make it next to impossible for a man to preserve his soul unsullied by this sin. For what is the main daily food of nine tenths of the readers in the land? Does it not

lie in those journals, daily and weekly, the chief aim and business of which is to represent every action of their opponents in the worst possible light? Calumny and slander is the breath of their life: and truly their name is Legion. Those whom they possess, they maddden: and anon they will enter into a herd of swine, and rush down violently with them into destruction. Indeed I hardly know what security can be found against this plague, unless it be that of the Asiatic king, who had fed so long upon counteracting poisons, that in the end they became harmless.

Hence it appears that the sin against the Holy Ghost is one from which in these days it is by no means needless to warn men. Nor is such a warning out of place within these walls. For, preserved as we here are, by the blessed privileges of our station and occupation, from many of the snares by which human infirmity is elsewhere beset, we are not thereby exempted from all moral responsibility. In no situation on earth can man be so, except when his mind has been paralysed by disease. On the contrary we seem to be more exposed than other men to several of those temptations which assail the heart through the inlets of the Understanding. Indeed our danger in this respect is the greater, because many of us have few calls to that practical activity, which might keep our intellect in check, and discipline us to a wholesomer humanity. Those who fight with the pen, it has ever been found, fight with far more bitterness and fierceness and scorn, than those who fight with the sword: and, alas! the bitterest bitterness, the fiercest fierceness, the most scornful scorn, has been manifested in the controversies of theology. Rightly ascribing a paramount importance to the truths of religion, men have

been deluded by the spirit of selfishness to identify those truths with their own dogmatical system, their own institutions and ritual, and have been ready to cry out *Crucify him*, against every one who ventured to question that system, or to reject any of those institutions. Often too has the sin of the Pharisees been repeated to the very letter: often in the history of religious persecutions have the virtues of those who were regarded as heretics, been attributed to the workings of Satan. Yet surely the history of Christianity should at least teach us this one profitable lesson, that the graces of the Spirit are not fettered to any system or ritual, but have been poured out abundantly on all who have sought to be justified by faith in the Saviour. Let us always bear this in mind. Controversies must come. The way ordained for eliciting truth is by the conflict of opposite opinions. But let us ever look first and mainly at the graces of the Spirit manifested in the hearts and lives of our opponents: and then, when we have thus learnt to prize and love them, we may set about refuting their errours, as a father would try to refute the errours of his son, or a brother those of his brother. Thus will our arguments find a readier ear; and when we work in the spirit of love, we may trust that the Spirit of love will work with us, and will purge our eyes to discern the truth, as well as the eyes of those whom we desire to convince.

This is a lore with which it is especially needful that we should be deeply imprest in these days; when all who are skilled in reading the signs of the times, foretell that a storm is at hand. At such a season we ought to be diligent in reminding ourselves and others, that, whatever may betide, it is our duty to hold fast to love.

Though father and mother be torn from us, though we be snatcht from our homes, from our friends, though our friends themselves forsake us and turn away from us, still it behoves us to hold fast to love. Though the enemy should rend our heart with anguish and woe, let him not poison it, let him not harden it. Even if his arm is uplifted against us, even if it be uplifted against those who are dearer to us than ourselves, let us remember that he may not be utterly reprobate, that he may be under some kind of delusion; and let him not so triumph over us as to despoil us of our Christian candour and charity. Nay, even if, as some forebode, that magnificent and holy temple, which God has erected for Himself in our land, is to be assailed by profane hands, — even if we see it tottering, — which may God in His mercy avert! — even if we behold it falling, — still let nothing tempt us to defend it with the arms of the flesh, with fraud and malice and evilspeaking and uncharitableness. Let us always keep in mind on what the Church of Christ is founded. It is founded on truth, and was reared by love, by that love which poureth forth its life. Meekness, gentleness, humility, patience, forbearance, longsuffering, fortitude, perseverance, are the pillars which adorn and uphold it: and its cement is blood, the blood of its Founder, the blood of its martyrs and confessors. Never let us believe the evil spirit, when he whispers to us, that the Church of Christ needs to be cemented anew with the blood of its enemies. This delusion indeed has too often prevailed: but the times when it has prevailed the most, have been when the Church of Christ seemed about to become the Church of Belial. O may such a terrible curse never fall upon

this land! May God, in His infinite grace, if it seemeth good to Him, preserve this His favoured Kingdom, and this His chosen Church! But may He never allow us to be drawn into sinning against the Holy Ghost, even though it seem to be for the preservation of this His Kingdom and Church!

SERMON X:

CHRIST'S PROMISE, THE STRENGTH OF THE CHURCH:

PREACHT AT HASTINGS,
AT THE ARCHDEACON'S VISITATION,
MAY 19th, 1835.

Matthew xxviii. 20.
Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

Two friends of the Church of England, who take any interest in her welfare, can hardly talk together in these days, but their conversation is sure to fall before long on the dangers that threaten her. That such is the fact, the experience of almost everybody present will bear me witness. All of you, my brethren, must have heard many such conversations within the last year: most of you will have taken part in them. Indeed a month seldom goes by, but the sound as of some fresh crack in the walls of our Church seems to pass from one end of England to the other. This is not a fit place for discussing the outward signs of the times. Thus much however may be taken for granted,—no one, I conceive, will be disposed to deny it,—that we have many and powerful enemies, who are marshaled against us by divers spirits, and not a few of whom are eager and alert to seize every opportunity of harming us. What then! Have we any reason to fear them?

None . . on account of any strength, or any craft, or any bitterness of theirs . . . none . . unless it is to be found in some deficiency or infirmity of our own. If the walls of our Church are indeed cracking,—if the sound be more than an illusion,—they must have been already in decay. It must have slipt off, at least in part, from the foundation on which it was originally built, and so long as it stood on which no earthquake had any power over it. That we should be aware of the enemies who are ready to assail us, that we should remind each other of them, may be inevitable: and, if our chief aim in doing so be to stir ourselves and each other to greater vigilance and activity, we are only discharging the part of loyal and watchful soldiers. Too often however the voice heard is rather that of lamentation and querulousness and despondency: and such a voice is of evil boding in every army, nor less so in the army of the Lord of hosts. If our lamentations be over anything but our own sins, our complaints of anything but our own want of godliness, they are too likely to prove the first notes of our dirge. The history of all ages teaches us, that, when a nation's heart has begun to fail, even those who were physically the strongest, have become as reeds shaken by the wind: whereas, when hearts have been stout and hopeful, and resolute to do and bear the utmost, a small knot of men has not seldom discomfited the proudest and most numerous foes.

Thus has it been even in human warfare. When we cast our eyes over the map of the world, many a bright name shines out from spots where it has been made manifest, that on this earth itself there is something stronger than the strength of the arm, and that, where the love of country and freedom bears a righteous sway in the heart,

it can triumph both over iron and gold. But if even the spirit that is in man can achieve such victories, what need have we to be daunted, albeit the children of Anak should be found among our enemies? If in our own sight indeed we are *as grasshoppers*, we shall be so likewise in their sight. But if we give ear to the words of Joshua,—if we bear in mind that, so far as our enemies are the enemies of the Church of Christ, *their defense is departed from them*, that, provided we are zealous in the cause of that Church, *the Lord is with us*,—we shall then feel a sure trust that the Lord, who delivered us out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear,—who upheld and preserved His faith, when the Roman empire would have crusht it, and when the Romish hierarchy would have smothered it,—will also deliver it out of the hand of the infidel Philistine.

When we look solely at human means, I acknowledge, it is no way unnatural that we should be cast down. When we are counting heads, or swords, those who are against us may easily seem to be mightier than those who are for us. The restraints of our profession, which almost preclude us from direct political action, would of themselves weigh down our spirits. For hope cannot breathe except in the air of free activity: inertness always breeds despondency. But if we can lift our hearts heavenward with the firm faith that the Lord is with us, then, no matter who or how many are in the hostile array, we shall feel assured that He who is with us is mightier than they who are against us. It was with a view of endeavouring with God's blessing to draw forth this conviction, and to shew on what grounds it must rest, and how it behoves us to strengthen it, that, having been appointed to preach on this day before you,—from several of whom I should far fitlier and gladlier

have received the lessons of the Spirit,—I have chosen the concluding words of St Matthew's Gospel for my text. Would that we might all of us feel that they are indeed spoken to us! Would that we might be among those who, in every time of danger and of need, hear a voice in their soul uttering these most comfortable words, *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!*

To form some estimate of the confident hope, full of peace and joy, which this promise must give to all such as can trust that they have a share in it, we have only to call to mind by whom and when it was uttered. By the Only-begotten of the Father,—by the Word, which was from the beginning with God,—by the creative Wisdom of God, which made all things,—by Him who was full of grace and truth,—by Him who had come down from the righthand of the Father, and had shorn Himself of the glory of the godhead, to dwell upon earth in the humility of the flesh, in the likeness of sinful man. May we not reasonably feel assured, that He who shewed forth such marvellous love for mankind, when they were lying wholly under sin,—that He who quitted the bosom of Eternal Love, to endure weakness, and suffering, and temptation, and the rancour of enemies, and the faithlessness of friends, and the shame of the cross,—will not suffer His truth to fail? May we not feel sure that, as He wrought such wonders for us, when we were yet far off, so now, having brought His people near to Him, He will ever protect and support them? If He was with His people, when their hearts were utterly estranged from Him, much more will He be with them, when their hearts are turned to Him. Moreover this blessed promise may be regarded as the first act of our Lord's reassumed divinity. He had put on the

godhead again. He had clothed himself anew with His power. *All power*, He tells us just before, *had been given to Him in heaven and in earth.* He had overcome sin: He had conquered death: He had burst the bonds of the grave: He was on the point of reascending to His Father, to share in that glory which He had with His Father before the world was: and, standing already on the threshold of heaven, He paused to lay the foundation of His Church, by delivering that command, which is followed by the promise in the text, and which along with that promise is its great fiat and code and charter. And this brings me to consider the point of nearest concernment to us,—to whom the promise was made. The answer to this question may enable us to judge how far we have any share in that promise.

Here I cannot but make mention of a notion, which has been brought forward somewhat prominently by certain very amiable and pious men in our days,—namely, that our Lord's promise in the text was not made to the collective body of His Church, to that body of which He is the head, the blessed communion of all faithful people, in all nations, and through all ages, — but that it was confined to the Apostles exclusively, as the supposed representatives of the episcopal body, — and that none are embraced in it, none must flatter themselves they have the slightest share in it, except the same episcopal body unto the end of the world (AV). To some of you perchance, my brethren, such an assertion may come with the sound of a novelty, and in that case, I would fain hope, of a most startling and offensive one. You would join with me, I would fain hope, in the earnest desire to purge our Church from all remains of that Judaizing Romish superstition, which would wrap up

the free spirit of the Gospel in the swathing-bands of forms and ceremonies, and would tether it to a name. That amiable and pious men should have taken up such a notion, which leads straightway to the most revolting conclusions, — according to which the chief part of protestant Christendom is cast out at once by a sweeping interdict from the pale of Christ's Church, nay, is recklessly declared to stand on a level with the heathens, and to be left to the uncovenanted mercies of God, — that amiable and pious men should not shrink with awe from such a notion, — that they should take it up under anything less than the clearest, most compulsory, most irresistible demonstration, — that they should not look carefully and anxiously round for some mode of escaping from such appalling conclusions, — might be deemed unaccountable, if we did not remember how prone we all are to convert every object of our peculiar interest and affection, even the objects of our purest worship, into idols. This is the last wall of the citadel in which the selfishness of man takes refuge and barricades itself; and it can hardly be thrown down altogether, so long as we continue here below. Our form of government must be the only good form of government, not because it is a good one, but because it is ours. Our Church must be the only Church, not because it is founded on truth, — few examine its foundations, still fewer examine the foundations of other Churches with patience and candour and honesty and a righteous selfdistrust: no; our Church is ours, and therefore it is the only true one. We still cannot bear to think that the veil of the temple should have been rent: we still cannot bear that the Gentiles should have a free approach to the Holy of Holies: we cannot bear that our neighbours should come

to it by any other road than ours. Lovers of the Bible too easily degenerate into bibliolaters, lovers of the Church into ecclesiolaters. Everywhere the carnal mind attaches itself to the letter, the form, the dregs, instead of the free living spirit. More especially is a delusion of this sort likely to fascinate the noblest souls, when the object of their love appears to be feeble or in danger. As every person of a kind heart will be indulgent even to the whims of the sick, and will feel a pardonable reverence for the slightest word of those who are lying on their deathbed, — as the gathering night of death throws a veil over the earthly part of our friend's character, and will only allow his more heavenly graces to shine through it, — so is it also when institutions are supposed to be in imminent peril. The lofty and the gentleminded cling to them more fondly than ever, *take pleasure in their stones, and favour the dust thereof*, vie with each other in exaggerating their merits, and can detect nothing in them but perfection. They will withdraw from the fellowship of the world into a cave, and dwell there; and when they are questioned why they do so, their answer is like that of the prophet: *We have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the people have forsaken His covenant, and thrown down His altars; and we, even we only, are left.* They still need the reproof with which the prophet was visited, to admonish them that the Lord is not in the strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but that, after all these have past by to prepare His way before Him, He then comes in the still small voice, *Let there be light*, dawning upon chaos.

This is not the place for me to speak concerning the apostolical institution of episcopacy: nor would the time allow me to set forth the reasons by which we are induced

to retain that institution, or which seem to render it indispensable to the perfect development of the idea of the Church. There are too many important matters awaiting me, more immediately connected with the subject of this sermon. I can only express my regret, that, where such strong arguments in favour of episcopacy may be drawn from the history and idea of the Church, many of its advocates, not content with proving that it is the best form of Church-government, have resolved to make out that it is the only one, and have tried to rest it upon Scriptural grounds, which in fact only weaken their case. For I cannot discover the shadow of a word in the Gospels, to countenance the interpretation referred to. Feeble and flimsy as are the Scriptural arguments, on which the Romanists maintain the inalienable primacy of St Peter, they are far more specious and plausible than those derived from the same source, on the strength of which it has been attempted to establish the absolute necessity of episcopacy to the existence of a Christian Church. I am aware, the interpretation I am controverting has been maintained by some very eminent divines in former times (AW). But a greater weight of authority is against it. Our Reformers, and the still more highly gifted men whom God called up in Germany and France to awaken the Church out of her spiritual sleep, knew nothing of the absolute necessity contended for; although they too would gladly have retained the episcopal order in their Churches, if the course of events would have allowed of it (AX). And need I remind you what is the argument of the noblest work our Church has produced, *the Ecclesiastical Polity?* You know, that, instead of arguing that episcopacy is the only institution conformable to Scripture, the point Hooker undertook to prove was,

that episcopacy is not contrary to Scripture, as it was declared to be by the Puritans. He contends, that, while in matters of Faith there must be unity, because the object of Faith is one, in matters of polity and discipline there may be diversity; yet that every establisht form of ecclesiastical government is rightly to be esteemed ordained by God, even as every establisht form of civil government is ordained by God (AY). On this foundation he raises his structure; and thus the arguments in favour of episcopacy, from the history and idea of the Church, become all the stronger, being freed from the strengthless props by which they are usually surrounded. It is unfortunate that theologians have not been duly aware, that one good argument is worth far more than a thousand bad ones. For in no department of knowledge does one find so little of that pure self-questioning love of truth, which dares not bring forward an argument, until thoroughly satisfied of its validity. In no department of knowledge is so much rubbish raked together: in none are so many rotten pieces of timber stuck round the building, by way of supporting it; which however in fact only lead us to doubt its strength; and when they crumble, as they needs must at the slightest touch, men fancy that the temple is about to fall. Indeed few reasoners bear sufficiently in mind,—to use an illustration applied somewhat similarly by Bishop Taylor (AZ), — that Tarpeia was crusht beneath the weight of the shields flung upon her. Let us, my brethren, carefully beware of that most hurtful and narrow-minded of monopolies, which would monopolize the grace of God. The way to life is narrow enough: let us not throw up any fresh mounds by its side, to render it narrower still. Let us rejoice in the blessed assurance,

that they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God. Let us rejoice that the salvation which Christ wrought for his people, is not tied to any one form of Church-government or other, — to anything that man can set up, or that man can pull down. Let us rejoice that in Christ Jesus neither episcopacy availeth anything, nor anti-episcopacy, but a new creature. Let us rejoice that the Gospel was to be preacht to all nations, and that all nations were to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

For this, you will remember, is the command, which immediately precedes the promise in the text, and may accordingly be regarded as the condition of that promise. To whom the promise was directly uttered, will admit of a question. St Matthew does not speak of any persons as present on the mountain in Galilee, except the eleven apostles. He adds however, that, *when they saw Jesus, they worshipt Him; but some doubted.* Now we can scarcely believe that, after the demonstration afforded to Thomas, any doubts can have lingered in the minds of any of the apostles. Indeed St John's account of the events which followed the resurrection, seems to infer that Thomas was the only one of the eleven, who was not fully convinced on the very day of our Lord's rising again. Hence it has been supposed, that, though only the eleven are expressly mentioned, the seventy may have been with them; or, — what to my own mind seems the most probable solution, — that this appearance of our Lord on the mountain in Galilee is the occasion spoken of by St Paul, when He was seen by *above five hundred brethren at once.* For the summons

which He sent to the brethren to meet Him in Galilee, would naturally bring together the chief part of those who retained any reverence or love for Him: and among these there might be several doubters. It is likelier too that the evangelist should have confined himself to the mention of the eleven, — who may perhaps have been taken apart from the rest, and admitted into more intimate discourse, — than that he, as well as the others, should have left out all notice of the most public of our Lord's appearances. Besides St Paul places His being seen by the five hundred, between the two appearances to the twelve, that is, it would seem, between the first appearance to them on the day of the resurrection, and the last appearance on Mount Olivet; which would coincide so far with the appearance in Galilee (BA).

Be this however as it may, we have enough in St Matthew's brief account, to make out from it to whom the promise was made, and how it is to be understood. Even if no one was present beside the eleven apostles, still we know that, in our Lord's speeches to the apostles, they are often to be regarded as the representatives of the whole Christian Church, and often as standing in the place of the ministry by whom the Gospel was to be preacht in that Church. By some it is supposed that on other occasions they are addrest as the representatives of the episcopal body, taken apart from the rest of the ministry. But of this I can find no evidence (BB). Now how are we to determine in what sense the words spoken to the apostles are to be understood in each passage, and by whom they are to be appropriated? If the context throws any light on the question, that light should be deemed decisive. If the context leaves the matter uncertain, we search the

rest of Scripture, in the hope of obtaining a clew; and on failure thereof we are guided by the ancient tradition of the Church. Thus for instance it was determined that the whole Church are to partake in the communion of the Lord's supper, and that the elements are to be administered to the communicants by the priesthood. In the passage however, from which the text is taken, there is no ambiguity. Let me remind you of the words. *Then the eleven disciples*, St Matthew tells us, *went into Galilee, to a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipt Him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake to them, saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* Now on no principle of interpretation are we warranted in severing the latter part of this sublime speech from the former. As the words follow, so do the thoughts rise out of and support each other. The command required the encouragement of the promise; and without the promise it could never have been fulfilled. Our Saviour begins with declaring His divine power: *all power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Therefore*, seeing that I am the Lord of all power and might, *go ye forth* to all nations, *and baptize all nations.* Assuredly the disciples needed this declaration of His infinite power to lift up their souls, so that they might compass the reach of such a vast undertaking, and not shrink in awe from the mighty thought of teaching all nations, and baptizing all nations, and bringing all nations to the knowledge of the One Eternal Triune God.

Mankind at that time were split and shivered into countless fragments, each with rough and jagged edges, repelling and wounding all the others. There was but one bond under which all were concluded: all were concluded under sin. There was but one yoke under which all bowed: all bowed their necks under the yoke of death. In this state of the world, torn as it was by fierce storms, the first use our Lord made of His renewed authority was to throw an arch of love over the earth, spanning it from side to side, and embracing it in its heavenly arms, — to call all nations to the truth, to call them all to holiness, to call them all to eternal life. And who were the persons whom He chose as His ambassadors, to bear His word to the ends of the world? Fishermen, men of the lowest estate, men utterly without human learning, — men whose minds had never wandered beyond the narrowest pale of Judaism, or soared above the notions of outward greatness and power, — men in fine, who were always ready with the cry, *What are we among so many?* who but a few days before had basely fled from Him at the first approach of danger, and the most forward of whom had shamefully denied Him. Yet these were the men whom He appointed to knock down the walls of Judaism, and to sweep away the abominations of Paganism, to turn the strength of Rome into weakness, and the wisdom of Greece into folly. Therefore, having made the declaration of His power, and having sent them forth as His rays to bear His light to the furthest corners of the earth, He encourages them by the promise that in this their work He will always be with them, that, so long as they bear His light, He will pour out His light through them, and that the flood of that light shall never fail, even unto the end of the world. The last words shew that the

promise was not made merely to those who were then before Him in the body, but to them and their seed after them, — to them and their spiritual successors in the great charge for which they were then ordained,—to them and to all in all ages of the world, who should go forth to teach mankind, and to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and to teach them to observe all such things as Jesus had ever commanded. In other words this blessed promise is a promise that our Lord will be always with His Church, that He will be the Head of His Church, and that all the members of the Church shall feel that they are united to the Head by the power which flows from Him into them; that He will be with His Church in the ordinance of baptism, and in the ordinance of teaching and preaching, and that they who baptize in it shall baptize with power, and they who teach and preach shall teach and preach with power.

Our Lord's promise, I say, is a promise that He will be always with His Church. But with what Church? How are we to make out with what Church He promises to be? Surely there is but one way: by looking at the charge which He gives to it. He does not say, that He will be with a Church which adopts this or that form of government; but with a Church which goes forth to teach all nations, and baptizes them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and teaches them to do all things whatsoever He had commanded. And here I trust it will not be deemed overstraining an argument, to observe, that so far are the apostolical and episcopal office from being identical, that they are essentially different; the special business of the former being to found new Churches, and to bring unbelievers to the

knowledge of the Gospel, — that of the latter, to govern the Churches already establisht, and to take care that the word of God be rightly divided to those who are already in the faith (BC).

This then may be esteemed the true character of a Church, which may lay claim to our Lord's promise that He will abide with it. In the first place it must go and teach all nations. It must be animated with the apostolical, the missionary spirit. It must not rest satisfied, that Christ should be preacht to those to whom He has been preacht of yore. It must not let sloth creep over it, so as to count that it has already attained. It must not be content with taking care of itself, of its own souls, of its own flock. It must so prize the treasure it has received, as to desire above all things to impart that treasure to others. It must have something of that spirit, which will leave the ninetynine sheep in the fold, to seek after and bring back the hundredth that is lost,—of that spirit, which moved our blessed Lord Himself to leave the throne of heaven, and the choirs of holy angels, and the rule of all the worlds, to seek after and bring back this poor wandering ball of an earth to the fold of His heavenly Father. It must have something of that spirit, with which Jesus Christ yearned for the salvation of souls, for the conversion of sinners, for the shewing forth and spreading of the glory of God.

In the next place it must baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. It must hold and preach the true faith in the Holy Trinity. It must not court the world by echoing its strain, and merely preaching faith in the Father, according to the heresy of the Socinians; with whom the Father in truth is no Father, except in the same sense as father Jove. Nor

must it try to steer a middle course between the world and the Gospel, by preaching faith in the Father and the Son, according to the heresy of some of the Semiarians. If it does, it has no claim to the promise: Christ is not with it. It must preach faith in the Father, as made known to us by the Son, — as the Father of the Son, and of all those who become His children by being adopted into the brotherhood of the Son, — faith in the Son, as the Only-begotten of the Father, the First-begotten before all creatures, as God manifest in the flesh, to the end that all who believe in Him may receive the adoption of sonship, — and faith in the Holy Ghost, as the purifying sanctifying Spirit of God, sent to us by the Son to be our Comforter, through whom, dwelling in our hearts, we become the children of God.

The third characteristic of a Church which has a share in our Lord's promise, is, that it must teach the observance of all the things which He commanded. Indeed this is scarcely separable from the second: for, if Jesus was God manifest in the flesh, all His words must needs be truth and righteousness and power. His Church therefore must not slur over His words, or pare away from them: it must preach the whole Gospel. It must not take what it likes, and reject what it dislikes: it must take all. It must not shape and dress up the Gospel after its own fancies, according to the Rationalist heresy in Germany. If it does, Christ is not with it. He is not with the Socinian heresy: He is not with the Rationalist heresy. There is no life in their words, no power in their preaching. Stillborn they came upon earth, and stillborn they lift up their heads from it . . stillborn in spirit, carcases of a departed faith, barren craters of an extinct religion. But

whenever a Church has had these three characteristics of a true Church, — when it has had the missionary spirit, — when it has acknowledged that the Father can only be known and approacht through the Son, that there is no other name under heaven by which we may be saved, but only the name of Jesus the Christ, and that, so frail are our purposes, and so corrupt our wills, it is impossible for us to do, or even to will anything good, except through the Spirit of God working in us and with us, — when moreover it has bowed with full submission to all our Lord's commands, and has tried to grave them all on its heart, and to lift up its voice through every note of the Gospel, — whenever a Church has had these three essential features, and in the same measure in which it has had them, Christ has ever been with it, in the fulness of the power given to Him over all things in heaven and in earth. He has blest its baptism, and enabled it to shine with a great light on the nations that were sitting in darkness. He has blest its teaching and preaching, and enabled it to enrich the courts of heaven with saints. He has come to it as to a mine, and has taken jewel after jewel out of it, to place them in His crown.

I began with speaking of the despondency with which the friends of our Church are wont to talk of its prospects. Along with these lamentations, we commonly hear complaints about the growth and spread of infidelity and dissent. It is true, these evils have reacht a great and alarming highth. But through whose fault have they reacht that highth? The matter cannot admit of a doubt; nor may we shrink from avowing the truth: mainly through the fault of our Church. Had our Church been what it ought to have been during the last two hundred years, —

had it possest the three characteristics of a true Church throughout that period, — had it been animated with an earnest apostolical desire of teaching the knowledge of God to all who were without that knowledge, — had it ever held fast to a living faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, — had it made that faith, and that alone, the term of its baptism and of its communion, ever keeping in mind that unity implies distinction and difference, — had it been zealous in teaching men to do all that Christ commanded, never entering into a compromise with the world, never ashamed to declare and enforce the word of God in all its purity, — O my brethren, how different would the state of England have been at this day! Peace and love would be in all her dwellings; and whithersoever the eye turned, it would behold the beauty of holiness. For bethink yourselves a moment, how bounteously the Lord has showered down His blessings upon us, — upon us whom He has called to exercise the ministerial office in our Church. With what power has He armed us! what manifold means of working on the souls of our brethren has He placed in our hands! and that not for a brief time merely, but for year after year, and for century after century. He has given us a pulpit in every parish in England. What a mighty power is this to wield, if it were only wielded duly! We are placed there rightfully: no one can take our post away from us: no one can gainsay us. We are commissioned to preach the faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and to teach our flocks to do everything that Christ has commanded. We are furnisht with words, which, if they are uttered in faith, make the hearts of the hearers burn within them. The people have come to us to be taught: they have been drawn to us by the strong ties

of habit, by the affection and reverence for the church and burial-place of their fathers. The poor in spirit have come to us: they that mourn have come to us: they that hunger and thirst after righteousness have come to us. Many have come to us asleep in their sins: all those whose sleep has been broken, whose consciences have been aroused, who have felt the craving for forgiveness gnawing at their hearts, have come to us. If many have turned away, and left the church of their fathers, and gone to strange houses of meeting, this has been owing in most cases to some fault or deficiency on our part. They came to be fed with the pure milk of the word; and, when they found that milk, they were satisfied, and came for it again and again. Yes, my brethren, I am sure there are those among you who can bear witness, how often the faithful words of the preacher fall on hearts, in which they are purged of their dross, and as it were turned into gold: there are those among you who must have been humbled by seeing the increase which God has given to their poor and scanty seed. Too often however they who came to us for the milk of the word, found nothing but the dry husks of didactic morality, — often nothing but the parings and scrapings of controversial theology, — delivered to them in a language three fourths of which they could not understand, made up of longtailed words of Latin origin, which would have been almost as intelligible to them in their original, as in their derivative form, — and in involved logical sentences, which they were utterly unable to disentangle. Can we wonder that many should have begun to loathe what was so tasteless and unsatisfying, and should have sought for food elsewhere? Can we wonder that, when we forgot our twofold duty, — the duty of

preaching the Gospel, and the duty of preaching it to the poor, — the ordinance of preaching should have become of little effect in our hands?

Again, from the circumstances of our Church, our clergy have been a body educated in human learning, and who should have been fitted out with all the means of refuting and convincing the gainsayers. In this respect we ought always to have stood on a vantage-ground above our adversaries. The chief part of our schools were committed to our keeping: the universities were given up to us altogether. We had to train our own successors: we had to fashion the minds of all the gentry of England. For eight or ten of the most important and ductile years of life, generation after generation has been entrusted to us, to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Moreover we have been enabled to mix with the higher classes as their equals, so that our words had almost always a ready access to their ears; while in our dealings with the lower we meet with that respectful deference, which leads them to look on every act of common kindness as an act of grace; so that "the gratitude of man" perpetually "leaves us mourning." Placed too above want, most of us have the means of relieving the wants of the poor; while, from the knowledge we can easily gain of their characters and conditions, we may use such discretion, that our alms shall very seldom be bestowed, as the alms of others are so often, to a bad purpose, or in vain. All these things, I am well aware, may be snares as well as advantages: for there is no worldly advantage, which Satan may not turn into a snare. Learning may estrange our minds from the pure simplicity of the Gospel. Wealth may relax and enfeeble us by its comforts and

luxuries. Our higher station in society may alienate us from the lower orders, and tempt us to fritter away our lives in an unprofitable intercourse with our equals and superiors. In numberless instances no doubt have our gifts been thus perverted. Such however was not the purpose for which they were bestowed, nor the purpose for which they ought to have been employed. Looking merely at the outward circumstances of the Church of England, at the manner in which God has fenced this His vineyard, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein, — scattering His churches and cathedrals over the land, and giving us the charge of the winepress into which His grapes are to be gathered, — looking, I say, merely at the outward blessings with which we have been favoured above all the nations of the earth, well may we exclaim, *What more could have been done to this vineyard, that God has not done to it?*

Wherefore then, when He lookt that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? How has it come to pass, for example, that there is so much division and dissension amongst us? that there is as much variance, as much illwill, as much bickering and contention among those who profess one faith and one hope, and worship one God and one Christ, as if we had rolled back into polytheism, and were each worshiping an abomination of his own? How comes it, that the parish church in so many parishes is very far from being the church of the whole parish? that in so many it is surrounded by divers houses of schism, which look up to it with an evil and bitter eye; while on its part it too often looks down on them frowningly,

sullenly, disdainfully? May we not with too much justice say of ourselves, in the words of St Paul to the Corinthians, *We are yet carnal: for whereas there is amongst us envying, and strife, and division, are we not carnal, and walk as men?* I do not mean, that any sudden outpouring of spiritual-mindedness would at once heal the wounds, wherewith our body has so long been torn; although it is impossible to set bounds to the power of the Spirit, when acting in hearts willing to ebb and flow at His bidding. But there can be little doubt, that, if our Church, from the time of her establishment, had steadily pursued a course of wise and gentle conciliation, — if she had always spoken in the language of peace to those who were clamouring against her,—if, instead of betaking herself to carnal supports, and carnal checks, and carnal punishments, she had relied wholly and solely, with a full unhesitating trust, on the only armour she ought ever to have put on, — the armour of God,—there can be little doubt, I think, that, if her only shield had been the shield of faith, and her only sword the sword of the Spirit, and if her feet had always been shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, running to and fro to bring peace wherever the warcry was heard, — no body of dissenters would ever have grown up in our land, within the pale of that faith which agrees in the acknowledgement of the Holy Trinity. And even of those who deny the divinity of our Lord, and who do think it robbery that He should be equal to God, the number assuredly would have been very much less, if their errour had not been fostered and encouraged by the prevalence of Arian and Semiarian, of Pelagian and Semipelagian notions, among the ministers of our own Church during the last century, even in the highest ranks of them. Not to

go further back than the Restoration, what a blessed thing would it have been for the Church of England, and for the Church of Christ, if the endeavours of that wise and holy man, Richard Baxter, — one of the wisest and holiest whom the Spirit of God ever purified for the edification of His people, — had been met with hearts desirous, above all things, of preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace! What a blessing would it have been, if by certain discreet and timely concessions in matters of less moment, at the Savoy Conference, such faithful and gifted servants of God, as Baxter himself, and Owen, and Manton, and Flavel, and Alleine, and Philip Henry, and Howe, had been retained in the bond of Christian communion, as our fellow-servants at the altar of Christ! But our Church seemed to be triumphant: her rulers would not yield anything. These pious men were driven from their pulpits: many of them had to endure cruel persecution. In a later age, when a spirit of literary and worldly lukewarmness had almost benumbed our theology, and when John Wesley lifted up his voice, to admonish us that the temple of the Lord is an empty shell, unless the Spirit of the Lord be dwelling in it, how easily might that large body of men, who afterward seceded from our Church, and in whom, if there was no little extravagance, there was also much fervour of faith, have been kept within the walls of our household by judicious kindness! Instead of which they were treated with overbearing scorn; and pains were taken to irritate them against us. It is true, the faults were not all on our side. The children who departed from us, sometimes gave us much provocation: but ought the parent to have felt provoked? They were often foolish, and given to wild fancies: the words of wisdom are never

listened to so readily, as when they are spoken in mildness. Assuredly if we had tried assiduously and perseveringly during the last two hundred years to win the hearts of our dissenting brethren by the love of God and of Christ, our appeals to them would not have been vain (BD).

Or, to turn our eyes to another still more fearful evil, the state of worse than heathen darkness in which so many thousands and hundreds of thousands, — I might almost say millions, — are growing up in our large towns, — to whom is the guilt of this their darkness to be imputed? Is their darkness owing to the mischance of their birth? Surely they were born in a land in which the light of the Gospel ought to have been shining from steeple to steeple, and spreading over all the country round. Alas! the Church of England cannot be wholly cleared from that guilt. It pleased God to bless our trade and commerce with a marvellous increase. Our prosperity in the fruits of this world became a thing unexampled in the history of mankind. The consequence of this increase of wealth, in fact the very means of producing it, was, that enormous hordes of human beings were collected together in spots, which thitherto had been petty hamlets. What reward then ought we to have given to the Lord for all the bounties that He had poured in such abundance upon us? What ought a Christian nation, a Christian Church to have deemed the first duty imposed on it by this change in its condition? Surely its very first duty was to take care that those whom it employed in turning the wheel and grinding the mill of its earthly riches, should not starve in utter destitution of the riches of heaven; that these new members of the body politic should be incorporated into the body of the Church. Yet for scores of years hardly

anything was done by the Church or the State of England to remedy this dismal and crying evil. That which was done, was done almost entirely by members of the dissenting communions: and surely we ought to bless them, for whatever help they gave toward the fulfilling of the duties which we had neglected, toward feeding the sheep whom we were allowing to starve. Hence a vast population has sprung up in the midst of this Christian land, who almost require that we should send missionaries to convert them to the faith of the Gospel, and to teach them the very name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Even at last, when we have begun to do something for the religious planting of these great moral wildernesses, how scanty have our efforts been, how inefficient! how utterly inadequate to a want, which can hardly be supplied effectually by anything less than the establishment of a body of home missionaries, as an integral part of our national Church!

You will not misunderstand me, I trust, brethren. You will not conceive that I am speaking with a purpose of heaping blame on the ministerial portion of our Church. If we judge them merely as men, by the ordinary practice of mankind, much may be said in their excuse. For we lie under many disadvantages, and are sadly clogged and thwarted in every attempt at vigorous action. I can only allude to a few of the hindrances by which we have been shackled during the last century. Foremost of these is the want of a regular governing and representative council, through which the feelings and wishes of the clergy might have found utterance, and by which such changes in our institutions and administration might have been made, as were called for by the changes in the condition of society, — by which the principle laid down with such wisdom in

the Preface to our Prayerbook might have been applied to the exigency of later times. There is no charm indeed in Houses of Convocation, any more than in Houses of Parliament, to ensure that wise and good measures will be adopted. In the former as well as the latter, everything depends on the spirit which sways them. But had there been such an assembly, grievances would have been brought forward, abuses would have been made known; and unless the Church had been wholly forsaken by its Head, something would have been done to redress them. Never assuredly were we in so forlorn a condition, but that some would have come forward to advise and exhort, if there had been a stage where they might have found a hearing. As it was, the more zealous members of our body, hopeless of acting on the public mind, confined their attention almost exclusively to their parochial duties, a field quite large enough to employ and reward the ablest labourers; and seeing no way of bettering the condition of the country at large, they were fain to content themselves with setting their own houses in order: or, if anybody thought of doing more, he fell under an ill name as an enthusiast. This is one of the chief evils which have resulted from the dependence of the Church upon the State. For entirely dependent it became, although in the common phrase, *Church and State*, it still keeps the precedence. The State, when it grew up, was too subtile for it, and, beginning by supplanting it in its birthright, ended in taking away its blessing, the blessing promist to faith, that its seed shall be like the stars of heaven in multitude.

Another great hindrance to the activity of the Church, arising from the same cause, was the manner in which the highest clerical dignities were filled up during the last

century, sometimes with political partisans, sometimes with persons whose sole claims lay in certain accidents of personal connexion, sometimes, — and this was almost the best case, — with men distinguisht for theological, or, it might be, for classical learning. Very seldom was any count taken, whether they had those faculties and those graces, which might fit them for bearing authority in the Church. For as to learning, it hardly qualifies a man better to be a ruler in the Church, than it would qualify him to be a ruler in the State. Desirable as it is that a clergy should be a learned and clerkly body, excellence in learning often tends to seclude a man, and to indispose rather than fit him for practical life. Yet at a time when the greatest energy was required, — when a spirit, like that of spring, ought to have been swelling and teeming in the bosom of the Church, so that it might have pusht forth leaf after leaf, and blossom after blossom, in spite of the chill blasts of the world, — it was deemed a matter of congratulation, if persons were set on high whose chief ambition was to sweep together the fallen leaves of the past. And even our learning, — as things taken out of their proper region ever dwindle and decay, — notwithstanding all the prizes to encourage it, how petty it became in stature, how meagre in kind! It partook in that degeneracy, which marks the last century in almost everything. When we turn from the divines of the sixteenth or seventeenth century to those of the eighteenth, it is almost like the transition in Pharaoh's dream from the fat kine to the lean. In the former moreover we find Christ, the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation: in the latter we read about the infiniteness of the Divine Attributes, about the Benevolence of the Deity, about the judgement evinced in

the Dispensations of Providence, about the excellency of the Morality of Christianity, about the demonstrative evidence contained in the accounts of the Resurrection. No wonder that such cumbrous abstractions fell powerless and dead on the hearers! No wonder that what was left of Christian life in England either seceded wholly from the Church, or gathered together round certain favorite ministers, and formed a party by itself; which, like all parties, had much of narrowness in its spirit, and repulsiveness in its tone; which however, through the blessing of God, has by this time become blended and fused into one with the main body of its brethren! No wonder that, when a large part of our clergy preacht essays of heathen morality, with no trace of the Gospel in them, except the name of Christ awkwardly dragged into the peroration, — no wonder that the children of this world thought it would be more consistent and more becoming, to discard the profession of that, in which they could perceive no semblance of reality!

A third cause,—and the last I shall refer to,—which has weakened the influence of our Church, has been the broad and almost impassable line of demarcation drawn between the clergy and the laity, as if they were two distinct castes, with totally different offices, each of them to be carefully barred out from encroaching on the province of the other. To such an extent has this pernicious errour prevailed, that, I am afraid, few persons, when they are talking of the Church of England, look upon it as coextensive with the English nation, or with that part of the nation who have received its baptism, and conform to its ritual. In common parlance the Church, though the frequent use of the word in our liturgy ought to teach every one the contrary, is unfortunately identified with the clergy. *To go*

into the Church is the common phrase for being ordained to a ministerial office in it; as if those who are so ordained were not members of the Church before. You know, my brethren, that such phrases are not insignificant, that the language of a people, according to the sense assigned to it in any particular age, is a faithful index of the opinions and feelings which are then on the ascendant. Hence both the laity, and even the clergy, are far too apt to look upon our office as a commission to preach to the heathens, rather than to instruct and exhort the chosen people of God. We forget that we are all members of the same household, and that we ourselves are only the servants of that household. We forget that the Gospel is not sent to twinkle in the sky, merely shewing the darkness of the earth, and leaving men to work by such light as they themselves can kindle, but that, while it fills the heavens, it is to pour its light into every nook and corner of the earth, enlightening us, at once to behold the one, and to fulfill all our duties on the other. We forget that those who are called in Christ, are all become one body in Christ. Common opinion rather inclines to suppose that the clergy and the laity are two bodies, distinct, and in fact the same as the Church and the world, a living and a dead body bound together by the bond of a nominal faith. Alas! in such a bond-fellowship the living does not impart of its life to the dead; but the dead imparts of its death to the living. Not only is the tendency of such a division to render the laity more profane, under the notion that it belongs to them to be so, and that sanctity of life is not demanded, except from those who stand within the rails of the altar: but the clergy also, if they mingle with the world, catch the taint of its profaneness; if they cut

themselves off from the world, they lessen their power over it. Outwardly too this errour, — which we have been by no means diligent enough in combating, — which on the contrary too many have encouraged, by looking with a jealous eye on the intrusion of any layman into what they deemed their own peculiar field, — has sadly impaired our strength, and stript us of our resources. We have been left alone, without any supporters. The whole weight of the ministry has fallen upon us, not merely that of those ecclesiastical and sacramental offices, which are our especial charge, but also that of those daily and more secular ministrations in which it behoves all Christians to help and comfort each other, giving freely of that which they have freely received. Hence many have slipt from under a load, which they felt themselves unable to bear: and thus every way the consequence has been, that Christ has not been preacht, as He ought to have been preacht to His people, — nay, not even as He would have been, if we had taken due pains to convince our congregation, that it is the duty of every Christian to do what he can for the spiritual welfare of his brethren, and if we had urged and exhorted all such as were piously disposed, to aid us in our heavenly task. Had that help been sought for in the spirit of Christian fellowship, it would have been obtained largely; it would have been granted joyfully. In almost every parish there are those who would speak in our behalf, if we would unseal their lips, — who would labour in our behalf, if we would empower and encourage and guide them to do so; but who in the present state of things, either fall asleep, from not having their faculties called forth, or, finding their lips sealed and their hands tied, so long as they continue in our communion, go over to some dissenting

congregation. By such a line of conduct we might in some measure counteract one great evil arising from the dominion which Mammon has obtained over society, as at present constituted, — namely, that the gift of learning can hardly be obtained, except by those on whom he smiles: whereby the lower orders, being unable to bear the expense of a learned education, have been almost excluded from the ministry in our Church. Yet it is from this primitive quarry that the strongest pillars of Christ's Church have been taken: many of the brightest names in our own Church sprang from the lower orders: we all know what the apostles were: Martin Luther was the son of a peasant.

The second great plague-spot in the body of our Church, the woful state of ignorance in which such masses of the population in our large towns have been left, is a matter the blame of which falls on all its members, the lay as well as the clerical. It behoved the rulers of the State to provide teachers and pastors for those whom they had swept together from all parts of the country to fill their treasury with gold: and it behoved the Church, in the discharge of her prophetical office, instantly and perseveringly to exhort and constrain the State to the fulfilment of this sacred duty. For seldom will the State of its own accord be rightly mindful of what it owes to the spiritual wants of its members. The priests should have led the way, and blown their trumpets, not once only, but, if need were, for seven successive days, as a signal for the walls of unbelief to fall down, until the people also lifted up their voices and shouted: and when that shout had been raised, the Lord would have given us the city. There is another great evil however, — an evil, the aspect of which

is not equally appalling, because its symptoms have not gathered in such huge blotches and blains, — but which in itself is scarcely less calamitous; I mean, the deplorable moral and religious ignorance, which lies, like a thick crust, over so large a portion of our peasantry: and the blame of this, we must needs confess, falls mainly on ourselves. For they are our allotted flock, the objects of our peculiar care; and in the majority of rural parishes they are not too numerous to be taken care of. At least, if we, the rural clergy of the Church of England, had been faithful and diligent in the discharge of our duty during the last three hundred years,—if we had preacht Christ, and Him crucified, to our people,—if we had stirred their hearts with the wisdom of God, and with the power of God, — if we had laboured to build up each succeeding generation, story above story, on the heads of the preceding, — surely by this time a tower of strength and of glory might have been raised up amongst us, on the pinnacles of which the Sun of Righteousness would have shone, and which would have been a pillar of light in the eyes of the nations. I spoke a while back of the great advantages with which God has been pleased to endow our calling in this favoured land. But the picture I gave was very faint and imperfect. Mighty indeed is the voice of the preacher, if his words are the words of the Spirit. Mighty is the word of God, which he is appointed to read to the people, if he reads it reverently and devoutly, as reading the oracles of God. Mighty is the voice of prayer, if it gushes from the depths of his heart, awakening and mingling with the prayers of the people around him. Beautiful and blessed is the light with which the Spirit of God shines on the prayers rising from the hearts of a devout congregation.

The church however is only one scene of our action, the field of battle, as it were, on which we are to muster our hosts for the war against evil. The training, the disciplining is to be carried on out of church. Every house in his parish is open to the minister: every heart in his parish is open to him. In every house he is a welcome visiter, welcome above all in the hour of need, when the heart is softened by affliction, when fear is gathering round it, when the shadow of death is hanging over it. Into almost every house he may be the bearer of a blessing, if only he enters it in the power of the Spirit. He is the comforter of the old, the teacher of the young, the friend, the counsellor, the admonisher of all. He is, or at least he might be, all this. For century after century the ministers of our Church have been, or at least might have been, all this. They have been set apart from the world, they have been ordained by God, to the end that they should be all this. Yet after all that God has done for the Church and State of England, what is her condition at this day? What is her condition even in those places where the action of her clergy has met with the fewest outward hindrances and checks, and where their number has been least disproportionate to the work they had in hand? We are for ever boasting of our improvements in the arts and luxuries of this world: what have they been in holiness and godliness? In some places there may have been a little; in most places, I fear, there is none. Many a parish is hardly better than an untilled heath: many a one is like a field lying fallow, with a chance ear springing up here and there. Even in the best there are sundry bare spots, and much of the crop is mildewed or blighted. Surely, if we had made a right use of the means with which

God has blest us, — if we had had that faith, which alone can lift up the huge mountain of sin, lying on the souls of mankind, and can say to it, *Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the nethermost pit,*—if, with the love of Christ constraining us, we had been instant at all times and in all places, in church and out of church, teaching the young, admonishing the erring, comforting the penitent, holding up the light of the Cross in the eyes of the dying,—surely, surely, if we had indeed been the faithful and zealous ministers of Christ, we should have felt ourselves, and it would have been made manifest to the world, that He to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, is indeed alway with His Church.

My brethren, much that I have said may have sounded in a tone of reproof. Yet it has not been said from any desire of finding fault, nor without a deep and oppressive consciousness of my own unworthiness, of my own falling short, not merely of the perfect apostolical idea of the Christian minister, but even of what I doubt not is realized by many of you. Being stationed in this place however, my business was not to set forth my own feebleness, but the strength and glory of Christ, to forget myself, and to think only of Him and His Church. The subject I unwisely chose was far too vast for the limits of a single sermon; and much as I have transgrest those limits, I have only glanced at a few leading points of it. My aim was to shew, that whatever there may be of imperfection, of weakness, of danger, in the present condition of the Church of England, is owing wholly to ourselves, to the inadequate return we have made for the many advantages and privileges entrusted to us ever since the Restoration. Let us acknowledge this; and we need not be dismayed. If we

are not mistaken in believing that a spirit of greater zeal and activity has sprung up of late years amongst us, while we render our humble and hearty thanks to Him who has awakened this spirit, and while we feel how much our responsibility is increast by this most gracious gift, let us regard it as an assurance that Christ has not forsaken us. It is we, that have been untrue to ourselves, and to Him: and yet, notwithstanding all our backslidings, He has still marvellously upheld us. Yea, and He will uphold us still. If we will turn to Him with true and zealous hearts, if we will forsake all things to follow Him, — if we will go forth in His warfare with the sword of the Spirit, with that two-edged sword, of which one edge is faith, and the other love, thus healing the wounds which it inflicts, — if we baptize and preach and teach in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and are diligent in teaching and practising all the things which our Master has commanded us,—then, as sure as God liveth, as sure as Christ is now sitting at the right hand of the Eternal Glory, so surely will He uphold and save us. It may indeed be written in the decrees of Infinite Wisdom, that the Church of England is to be perfected by sufferings, after the pattern of her Lord, and to fall by the hand of man, and to be laid for a season in the grave: but if His Spirit be in her and with her, she will soon rise again: and her resurrection will be the prelude to her ascension into heaven.

My brethren, it is our high and blessed privilege to be the ministers of that Church. Our task is the most glorious which can be appointed for man, to go after that which is lost, to win souls for Christ, to fight the battles of Christ against Satan, baffling his wiles with the simplicity of

the Gospel, to carry the knowledge of God into hearts which it has not yet reacht. Each of us has a flock of his own to feed and to guide: each of us has stray sheep to bring back to the fold: each of us is admitted by Christ to be His fellow-labourer in that work, for which He quitted the throne of heaven, and died the death of the cross. Each of us may lend his arm toward holding up our Church from falling: or, if we do not lend our arms toward upholding it, we lend them toward overthrowing it. In fact the only enemies she has reason to dread, are her faithless ministers. Let it be our first and last aim, our first and last prayer, to glorify Christ in our lives. It may be, He will look with such favour upon some of us, that He will allow us to glorify Him in our deaths. Only let us keep this hope stedfastly before us, that Christ may be magnified in our bodies, whether it be by life or by death. Let us strive to be faithful in His service, assured that, if we are so, He will be with us alway, even unto the end of the world. Nay, this is not all: for when this world shall have sunk back into the abyss out of which it was raised by the creative Word, when the fleeting cloud of Time shall have melted away into Eternity, even then Christ will still be with His Church, yea, more than ever with it, the Light and the Soul and the Spirit of the heavenly Jerusalem for ever and ever. Amen.

THE PROPHET IN THE WILDERNESS:

A SERMON,

PREACHT IN THE ENGLISH CHAPEL AT ROME,
ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 20th 1833.

TO CHARLES CHRISTIAN BUNSEN,

LATE MINISTER OF THE KING OF PRUSSIA,

AT THE COURT OF ROME.

My dear and honoured Friend,

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of dedicating this sermon to you, which the wish you have repeatedly exprest to see it in print has led me to insert in this volume. In my own eyes its chief value is, that it formed a new link in our friendship. From the very first indeed you had received me with that frank and gracious cordiality, which I have so frequently found in your countrymen: from the very first we both felt that we were bound together by our common admiration and love for Niebuhr. But this sermon, you said at the time, convinced you that there was a still more intimate principle of union between us; and therefore I venture to trust that you will excuse my connecting your name with an offering so unworthy of you. Often as my thoughts recur to Rome, and to the overflowing delight I enjoyed there, from so many rich sources, from scenes of the deepest historical and sacred interest, and from the exquisite beauties of art and of nature, they call up the image of him, whose wisdom and kindness almost doubled that delight, and whose friendship is the most precious part of the treasure I brought away. Many a time too do I go back to that holy sanctuary,

where, as you felt a righteous exultation in declaring, you have been allowed to set up the pure spiritual worship of God on the site of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.

May God be ever with you, and prosper your endeavours to serve Him ! and may He enable you to accomplish some portion at least of what you desire for the good of His Church in your own country !

Your ever grateful and affectionate Servant,

J. C. Hare.

Matthew xi. 7.
What went ye out into the wilderness to see?

THE sound of these words must be familiar to you all; and few can have forgotten the occasion on which they were uttered. At an early period in our Lord's ministry, and, — as appears both from the context in St Matthew, and from the corresponding passage in the seventh chapter of St Luke, — soon after the institution of the twelve apostles, John the Baptist, who was then in prison, having been told of the wonderful works that Jesus was performing, sent two of his disciples, with a charge to ask the Worker of those miracles, *Art Thou He that should come? or do we look for another?* Not that the messenger who was sent before the face of the Lord, was ignorant of Him for whom he came to prepare the way. Not that the Morningstar was ignorant of the Sun, of whose rising it was the herald and the harbinger, and in the fulness of whose light it longed to fade away and to be swallowed up. On the contrary the Baptist himself had already declared publicly, that Jesus was the Messiah, when he *bare record that he had seen the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and abiding upon Jesus*, and that he was thus certified by divine inspiration that Jesus *was the Son of God, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.* His object therefore in sending this message would seem to have been to obtain an assurance that the new teacher, who had arisen in Israel, and the rumour of whose marvellous works and doctrine had penetrated through the walls of his prison, was the same person whom at His baptism

he had recognized and acknowledged to be the Christ, but who at that time had been pleased to fulfill all righteousness by appearing in the character of an inferior, and declining for a season to assume His own higher, more spiritual authority.

For the words of the message,—*Art Thou He that should come? or do we look for another?* — are hardly compatible with the interpretation proposed by certain commentators on the passage, that John's design was not to satisfy himself, — his conviction having, as they conceive, already attained to the highest degree of certainty, — but to implant the same conviction in his disciples, by sending them to hear the words, and to see the works, which proved Jesus to be the promist Messiah. And why should he have shrunk from making the same open declaration, which he had previously made, when his disciples told him, that He who had been with him beyond Jordan, and to whom he had borne witness, was baptizing? Such an indirect line of proceeding, — familiar and dear as it is to human policy, and to the wisdom of this world, ever fond of walking in the paths of that prompter, whose persuasions first led to the plucking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, — is altogether alien from the kingdom of heaven, and wholly at variance with the truthspeaking, straightforward, zealous character of the Baptist. I do not mean, that it is never allowable to speak on any subject indirectly. Our Saviour's answer on this very occasion, His conduct on several others, which a moment's consideration will recall to your minds, proves that it is not only allowable, but may often be commendable, and even a matter of duty. We may be in situations where modesty and a seemly selfrespect forbid our putting forward the naked

truth prominently. At other times a like obligation may be imposed on us by prudence, or, to speak more correctly, by charity: for all prudence, which is anything else than the servant and agent of charity, providing for the careful execution of its dictates, according to its twofold office, of doing whatever seems to be for the good of others, and of refraining from whatever will harm them, unless for the sake of some higher good, is at best of an ambiguous nature, and treads on such slippery ground, that it will scarcely keep from sliding into sin. If this restriction be duly attended to, if we remember that prudence is a weapon, which we are bound, whenever occasion arises, to wield in defense of others, but which Christianity forbids our unsheathing, save in a case of extreme necessity, for ourselves, we shall easily see that, though it may not unfrequently be a duty to worship Truth in secret, no contingency can ever render it a duty to deny or violate her worship. It may now and then be right to use such words as shall not thrust the truth too obtrusively forward: but it can never be right to use words, the plain, obvious, direct meaning of which, as they are sure to be understood by our hearers, is false. Had St John felt thoroughly confident in his own mind that the teacher to whom he sent his disciples, was the same Jesus, at whose baptism he had seen the heavens open, and the Spirit of God descending, and had heard the declaration of the Almighty Father, being thus admitted at once into the immediate presence of the Triune Godhead, surely he would not have commissioned his disciples to address Him in words implying that he had either forgotten or distrusted the testimony of the Heavenly Witnesses (BE).

When these disciples came to Jesus, and put the question with which their master had charged them, our Lord,

as I have already mentioned, did not give them a direct answer, but one more forcible and impressive than the most explicit assertion could have been. He appealed to His words and works to testify for Him; and they did so; even as the natural world, which is the work of God, and the laws of nature, which are the words of God, by their grandeur and beneficence bear witness to the power and goodness of their Author. At the same time His answer contained a manifest reference to the prophecy, in which Isaiah had announced the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom; thus proving that He was *He that should come*, He of whom all the prophets had spoken, the expected *Consolation of Israel;* and knitting together the two parts of the great chain of supernatural external evidence, the prophetical and the miraculous. Moreover our Lord's conduct, on this as on every other occasion, was an example and model for us to strive after and to copy, so far as the imperfect may strive after and copy the perfect; an example of meekness, such as man, it is true, can never equal,—for man has no rays of the Godhead to veil beneath the form of a servant; an example however which should teach us on all occasions to keep from everything like pretension or assumption, to put on simplicity both inwardly and outwardly, and in all our dealings with our neighbours to let our actions speak for themselves, without attempting to set them off with any fictitious colours. Nay, the words used by our Saviour in enumerating the works which attested His mission,—*the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear*, — do they not also enumerate the works by which every true Christian is bound, according to his ability, to attest his calling as Christ's servant and follower? Yes, assuredly, it is the

duty, or, rather ought I to say, it is the privilege, of Christ's servants to imitate their Master even in these His miraculous works. They too, so far as in them lies, — and how much lies in us we know not, nor, until we have exerted ourselves strenuously and perseveringly, can we guess how much the very feeblest and meanest may accomplish, when our arms are strengthened by faith, and by the Spirit of God working in us and along with us, — we too, my brethren, are to supply the blind with eyesight, and the deaf with hearing; we too are to cleanse the leper, and to help the lame to walk. We are to do this even in a literal sense, waiting on the bodily wants and infirmities of those in whose persons Christ calls on us for aid: for every one whom he sees in trouble or affliction, is to the true Christian an angel of the Lord sent to summon and to enable him to shew forth his duteous love for his Master. But we are also to do the same in a higher and spiritual sense, a sense evidently included both in our Lord's speech, and in the prophecy to which He refers. We are to teach the spiritually blind to see, by purging their eyes with the light of God's word. We are to help those who are lame, and cannot stand alone, to walk, by bringing them the staff of the Gospel to lean on. We are to open the ears of those who have been deafened through the din of the world, by breathing the gentle healing sound of the truth as it is in Christ into them. We are to cleanse the lepers, who are polluted by their sins, and shut out from the congregation of the faithful, by bringing them to take hold of the hem of the Saviour's garment. Nay, in this sense, we may at times even be endowed with power to work the greatest, the sublimest, the most wonderful of all miracles, and through God's blessing may become the means of

raising up those who are dead in heart and soul, and a prey to everlasting death, to a life of pure and endless happiness. Consider, my friends, and let not the thought flit away from before you, driven aside by any sudden fancy that the caprice of the next moment may start . . consider, ye who are ambitious of power and influence, and who wear out your lives in pursuit of it, these are the powers with which Christ invests the servants of His heavenly kingdom; these are the rewards which He bestows on them; these are the prizes with which He tempts them to follow Him. Consider, ye whose happiness is centered and grounded in the indulgence of mutual affection, under all or any of its various forms, whether parental or filial, fraternal, conjugal, or social, consider that earthly love passes away, may easily fade, is liable to be nipt, or at best must fall asleep before long in the grave; but the gratitude and love of a soul that you have helpt to a knowledge of its Saviour, will abide with you, and be your comfort and joy, through the untold ages of eternity.

The manner and means by which such marvels may be wrought, are pointed out in the clause with which our Lord concludes the list of the proofs of his Messiahship; *the poor have the gospel preacht to them.* In this work, which, next to the offering up of Himself as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, was the highest and most special object of His coming, and without which that sacrifice itself would have been of no avail, — in this work, by which man was to be led to receive and appropriate the benefit of the salvation purchast for him, — Christ not only allows, but invites and commands His followers to take part with Him. Nay, such is His infinite condescension, that, so far as relates to the number of converts to the Gospel, He has not seldom

been pleased to crown the labours of His faithful disciples with far greater success than waited on His own preaching during His earthly ministry. To all indeed such grace is not imparted: but all, within their own sphere, may do something, may do much. For if the repentance of a single sinner brightens the joy of the angels in the fulness of their beatific contemplation, it surely cannot become man to deem slightingly of the least thing done for the welfare of his brother's soul. We must all know some, who are spiritually poor, who stand in need of spiritual aid, and who would be benefited by it, if seasonably and kindly administered: and to such, according to their exigencies, we, the weakest of us, provided we set about the task with the love of God in our hearts, may be serviceable, by counsel, by exhortation, by warning, by consolation, by pouring the oil of peace upon their troubled spirits, by letting in the light of truth into the dark places of their souls. It is true, in such things prudence, as in all practical matters, in proportion to their importance, is especially requisite; strict and unceasing selfwatchfulness is requisite. We must be careful to do everything with the utmost gentleness and mildness: we must keep a vigilant look out against everything harsh and censorious, lest we repell those whom we would fain attract, lest we encompass the rose of Sharon with thorns which do not belong to it. Above all, we must beware of everything like ostentation: we must beware, lest, while we are making believe to set up God's image on high, we be in reality toiling to set up our own. But let not the fear of doing ill withhold us from endeavouring to do well. Let us not pamper our sloth with the notion that such a plea will be deemed valid for neglecting to perform our duty. We know what sentence

fell on the unprofitable servant, who hid his talent in the earth, lest his lord should reprove him for making a bad use of it. One inducement moreover, which exercises no slight sway among the incentives of human enterprise, is always in full force here: the return is sure, and, though it may not be speedy, will infallibly be plenteous. No good seed ever fell in vain. It may not bear the very fruit, and at the very time, we expect: but even if the ground where it falls should choke and stifle it, the angel of the Lord will take it from thence, and plant it in the gardens of heaven. With this assurance in our hearts, it matters not what evil report, what reproach or persecution, we may incur, in the discharge of this paramount duty. Against all such assaults we are borne up by the promise with which Jesus dismisses John's disciples, to cheer and support their master in his dungeon, — *Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me;* that is, whosoever waits my time in patient trust, undisheartened by appearances, however offensive they may seem to the carnal understanding, and who endures all the shame, all the ignominy, and all the suffering, to which he may be exposed on my account, without flinching or swerving in his faith.

When they had received our Lord's answer, the disciples of the Baptist returned to their master; and after they were departed Jesus began to speak to the multitude concerning John. His speech opens with the emphatic interrogative which I have selected for my text: *What went ye out into the wilderness to see?* And may we not conceive Him to put the same question to all of us? may not I in His name ask you all and each, or rather entreat you to ask yourselves, — *What have you come out into the wilderness to see?*

In a certain sense, you will easily perceive, such a question is especially applicable to us, who are here assembled, in a forein land, far from our homes, from our friends, from our country, from the Church of our fathers. In a certain sense, all who are dwelling in a strange land may be regarded as in a wilderness. Great indeed, and beyond all estimation, is the loss of what we leave behind us, when we lose sight of our native shores. The fire of the domestic hearth, of all earthly influences the most sacred and sanctifying, the nearest akin to religion, ceases to warm and enlighten us. All those ties of custom and habit, which are so useful in upholding our frail and crazy morality, are at once cut away from us. The regard for the opinion of our friends no longer checks and controlls us. The imaginative charm of the scenes in which our childhood and youth were spent, a charm which, wherever it is truly felt, is no less healthful to our moral than to our intellectual being, vanishes from before us. The idea of patriotism, among all merely human ideas the noblest and most ennobling, which even in nations unblest with the knowledge of the true God gave birth to acts of such heroic selfdevotion, grows dim and fades away within our souls; or at all events is seldom called forward, unless it be in a spirit of contemptuous pride and acrimonious self-complacency. And over and above all this, while we are homeless, friendless, countriless, and almost lawless, we are at the same time churchless, and may too easily become, or at least run a great risk of becoming totally godless. Through God's blessing indeed in this city our loss is in some measure mitigated: our meeting here is a token that it is so. Yet how different, how far less salutary, at least in its natural and ordinary tendency, must the effect

of a place of worship like this be, when compared with that of the church in which we first learnt to offer up our prayers in communion with the people of God, while our parents and brethren were kneeling beside us; in which the word of God first found its way to our hearts, in the midst of our native parish, as it were our more extended family, with all the obligations of customary charity, with all the occasions of shewing kindness in word and deed, which in our homes are every moment springing up, tempting us, and with a gentle force almost constraining us, to come out of ourselves! And while we lose so many of the props on which we have been wont to lean, what do we gain in their stead? We lead the most dangerous and hearthardening of all lives, a life of continual self-indulgence. We are mainly busied, not in doing our duties, not in performing our daily taskwork, which, whatever it may be, is in itself a kind of duty, but in gratifying our appetites and our tastes. The ceaseless run of objects which glide before us, merely exciting a momentary flush of curiosity, without taking any strong and lasting hold on our affections, is in itself, like all stimulants, hurtful and enervating. In like manner the changeful succession of persons whom we meet in the frivolous intercourse of casual society, without feeling any interest in them, any permanent regard for them, careless whether the coming night blot them out from the book of our memories, or even from the book of life, weakens and withers and palsies the heart.

At the same time we are beset by temptations to do what we have been bred up to consider as blamable and wrong. For there will always be more or less of diversity between the customs and manners of different nations.

Even in questions pertaining to morals, they will look at sundry things from different points of view; and much that the one deems reprehensible, may be accounted unobjectionable by the other. Hence the propensity to do as others do,—a propensity which in matters of indifference is not only excusable, but may often be the safest rule for our guidance, — is perpetually inciting us in a forein land to violate and throw away those maxims by which from our youth up we have been wont to regulate our conduct; a violation which can never be otherwise than injurious to the purity and integrity of our moral being. Or, if we adopt an opposite course, we must secede and seclude ourselves from our neighbours, at the expense of being taxt, and not always undeservedly, with censorious austerity. For few will consent to mortify themselves, and to make what they regard as sacrifices, without taking care that the smoke of the sacrifice shall mount up before the eyes of the world, and seeking to get some amends for their carnal mortifications by indulging in spiritual voluptuousness. In this, as in most other things, it is difficult to hit the due mean. We are reluctant to confess that our neighbour, whose faith is different from ours, may do many things in innocence, which in us would be unjustifiable: and though we are too ready to devise excuses for ourselves, in that which we condemn in others, we can seldom persuade ourselves to grant a licence to others, which we cannot extend to ourselves. Very few have ever understood, still fewer have acknowledged, that *he who regardeth the day regardeth it to the Lord, and he who regardeth not the day to the Lord he doth not regard it.* In this manner, by being set in perpetual collision with things which shock our principles or our prejudices, we are led into frequently

sinning against charity: or, if we try to be tolerant, we slide by an almost inevitable consequence into a kind of moral apathy, a state of heartless soulless indifference. To instance in a single point: what feeling can be more becoming than veneration for the place in which God is habitually worshipt, and in which the devout aspirations of generation after generation have as it were formed a hallowed atmosphere? But must not this feeling suffer grievous and irreparable injury from the practice of frequenting forein churches for the mere gratification of the eye and ear, out of vague and vain curiosity, for the sake of lounging about and gossiping, almost as if one were in an assembly-room? and that too while the worship of God is going on, and while the congregation of His people are kneeling and offering up their prayers close by? Let none urge that he holds the form of worship to be corrupt. This is no excuse, no palliation. At all events it is a worship offered up to the Christian God, to God reconciled to the world in Christ. And what if we were to enter a temple of heathen superstition, would not simple goodbreeding, — if I may allowably refer to such vulgar motives, when I ought rather to appeal to the reverence every Christian is bound to feel for all those for whose sake Christ died, even in the moments of their most pitiable delusion, — of course I am not speaking of such as go forth with a set purpose to overthrow idolatry, and to plant the purity of the Gospel in its stead: their conduct would be determined by other principles, and judged of by other rules: I speak only of travelers like ourselves, who have no such purpose, and who are living under the protection of the government; and I ask whether simple goodbreeding, which in its best sense is itself an offset grafted

by Christianity upon social life, would not enjoin us to demean ourselves, even in a temple of heathen superstition, with at least as much decorum as we should shew at a concert or an opera? And do we all so demean ourselves in the churches of God here?

If this question cannot be answered satisfactorily, I may assuredly hold myself warranted in asserting that we, in this forein land, are in what to us is in a certain sense a wilderness, a wilderness moreover which may seem to have already begun to rebarbarize us. And should this be so, have we not good cause to ask ourselves, *What have we come out into this wilderness to see? a reed shaken by the wind?* What inducement, what temptation, what object has exercised so mighty a fascination over us, that for its sake we have quitted our homes, with all their joys, and all their comforts, and those greatest and truest of all comforts, those comforts which strengthen our moral nature, our duties, — that we have sallied out from our native gardens, where the fair flowers of affection sprang up almost spontaneously around us, and where duty formed an evergreen wall to screen and protect them from the scorching and blighting blasts of passion, — and have wandered forth into this far wilderness, where no familiar blossom welcomes and gladdens our eyes, where no familiar shade shelters and refreshes us? What are we seeking in the wilderness? Have we come without aim, without purpose, without reflexion, merely because others do so, because it is the custom, in compliance with the frivolous rules of fashion, or for the sake of whiling away, or, as the significant and forcible phrase is, of killing a certain quantity of that precious time which God has given us to work out our salvation, thus committing an act of partial suicide? for what is

killing our time, but killing a portion of ourselves, and casting that into the jaws of death, which bears us indissolubly along with it, and which ought to be the porch and vestibule of eternal life? Or have we come abroad out of idle, empty curiosity, to see what is to be seen, to look, without any meditative or systematic thought, on the scenes that nature presents, on the habitations, the works, the manners and customs of man, regarded merely as a reed shaken by the wind, as the creature of whim and caprice, the sport and scorn of the elements, shifting and drifting about with every gust of momentary passion?

But what came we out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Have we undertaken our journey from a motive more absurd, if not still meaner and baser, under an expectation of finding luxuries and pleasures in a forein land greater than what our homes afford us? Lo, these are not to be found in the wilderness: every step we take in it must convince us of the vanity of such an anticipation. For *they that are gorgeously appareled and live delicately*, the pomp and splendour and luxury of this world, are to be found only in the dwellings of the rich. Nay, is it not with reference to matters of this very kind that we for ever hear forein nations called uncivilized in comparison with our own? For even though they should have the advantage of us in sundry points, in some they must probably be inferior, or at least are sure to be accounted so by those whose tastes have been trained under a different temperature. In questions of taste custom exercises a very arbitrary and all but absolute sway; and our frame is so constituted that the craver after luxury always becomes a craven and a slave. He loses all energy, all command over his faculties, all power of holding them in balance: he

is incapable of relishing the pleasure which he finds, from pining after that which he has parted with; and the rumpled roseleaf will ruffle and fret him, and mar all his delight, even on a bed of roses.

But what came we out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say to you, and more than a prophet. Before I call your thoughts to this portion of our Saviour's speech, and point out in what way, and under what sense, we may apply it to ourselves, let me remind you that these interrogations are not of merely temporary and occasional concernment, and do not bear upon us solely in our present condition, as living afar from our homes, as travelers and absentees. For, in this world, we are all living afar from our home, are all travelers and absentees. Ever since the expulsion of our first parents from Eden, we have all been pilgrims and dwellers in the wilderness, dwellers in tents, having no fixt abidingplace, outcasts and exiles from Goshen, and journeying, though often straying on the way, often loitering and halting, often faltering and fainting, at one time through ignorance and weakness, at another through the mutinous and rebellious stirrings of pride, toward our spiritual Canaan. Through God's merciful goodness indeed the wilderness is no longer what it once was. The way of the Lord has been prepared; a highway through the desert has been made straight for our God; and where this way lies, the wilderness and the solitary place are glad, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose. So long too as we walk along this highway, we can neither stray nor stumble: *the wayfaring men, though fools,* as the prophet promises, however simple and ignorant they may be, *shall not err therein* (Isaiah xxxv. 8).

This *way of the Lord* then, there can be no question, —

seeing that it is so safe even for those who elsewhere might not be surefooted, seeing moreover that it is encompast by so many blessings, — is what we all ought to seek in the wilderness. But how are we to find it? One thing is clear. He whose eyes are dark cannot see the light, nor that whereon the light shines. We must endeavour therefore to purge our eyes from the film that bedims them,—we must draw back the lids that curtain them in darkness,—in order that the light of heaven may shine upon them and into them, and that we may behold all the objects around us in their true, genuine shape, glorified by its blessed radiance. God has given us much: He has done much, almost everything for us: but something still remains, which we alone can do, and which we must do for ourselves. The very power of opening our eyes is God's gift: but it rests with us to make use of that gift: and unless we do so, it becomes null, so far as we are concerned. The prophet, to rouse our exertions, gives us the assurance, that, so long as we walk in the way, we shall not err: for this must evidently be his meaning, not, as some would vainly persuade us, that he who has once become a Christian can never fall aside. Such an extension of the doctrine of infallibility from the collective body of the Church to each individual member is refuted by the whole of Scripture; which, in candour, as in all its merits, surpassing every other book, is careful to record the failings of the saints. Indeed the words immediately preceding the promise referred to prove that the narrower interpretation is the correct one: for in them the prophet warns us that *it shall be called the way of holiness*, and that *the unclean shall not pass over it.* So that, to fit ourselves for finding out this way, and for abiding in it when we have

found it, we ought to strive with all our strength to purify ourselves, and to keep ourselves pure, from all uncleanness, while with earnest supplications we evermore entreat the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled to become pure and to continue so.

The way of the Lord, I have said, is what we ought to seek in the wilderness. Whatever in this world is grand or lovely has been planted and has grown up along its side: all else is darkness and barrenness and desolation. We are to go forth to see, not a reed shaken by the wind, not a man clothed in soft raiment, but a prophet, yea, and more than a prophet. In every condition and circumstance of life, wherever we may be placed, whatever task we may have to discharge, this ought to be our chief purpose and aim, as in all our words to express the will of God, and in all our deeds to perform it, so in all our thoughts to seek it out unweariably and under all its manifestations. Nor need we be at a loss where to seek. Every spot on the globe, every moment of our lives, nay, every moment in the record of all time, may supply us with food for religious contemplation. Whatever we see or hear or feel, whatever affects us, whatever betides us, may be viewed in connexion with the will of God, as springing from it and displaying it. There is nothing too low for it to stoop to, nothing too high for it to mount to. If we ascend up into heaven, and lanch our thoughts amid the stars, God is there: He made them, and gave them their laws, and ordered their downsettings and their uprisings. If we dive into the bowels of the earth, God is there also. If we take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there we may behold the traces of His hand and the workings of His righthand. Nay

thus, and thus alone, may we penetrate without peril, without the risk of losing ourselves, into all the dark places which lie within and around our nature: thus, and thus alone, will our night be turned into day. That in which we see God, is no longer dark: the darkness is no darkness to Him; but the night is as clear as the day: the darkness and light to Him are both alike. Whatever is animated and pervaded by faith is good and lasting, so far as it is indeed animated thereby. Whatever is alien from God, and devoid of faith, is hollow and perishable and worthless. To the unenlightened man the world and his own kind may appear like a reed shaken by the wind: by the sensual man everything may be regarded as the means and fuel of luxury: but to the Christian, whose eye has been purged, the sphere of whose vision has been enlarged by faith, the world is as a prophet that tells him of God; and he hears all nature, animate and inanimate, joining in the choral hymn of adoration and thanksgiving to its Creator. Hallelujah is the sound of the waves; and the mountains reply, hallelujah! hallelujahs float along in the murmuring of the streams, in the whisperings of the grove and forest; yea, even in the silent courses of the stars his spirit hears the mystic hallelujah.

And now, my Christian friends, may I not ask you again, *What came you forth into the wilderness to see?* Many of you perhaps may demur, that, in what I have said above, I have misrepresented your motives, that you have not been impelled by listless curiosity, not by the insatiable appetite of pleasure, but that you have come abroad, some of you to study the manners and institutions of forein nations, — others for the sake of visiting places that have gained a name in story through the illustrious

deeds performed in them, and thus of giving a more definite body to your historical conceptions, — others from a love for the beauties of natural scenery, — others out of a fondness for the arts, and a wish to improve your acquaintance with them, — in other words, for the sake of enlarging your knowledge, and of cultivating your taste: and many of you may combine two or more of these objects. So far good. But is this all? Do you stop here? Ought you to stop here? Have you effected anything worth effecting, can you effect anything worth effecting, if you are contented to stop here? The history of the world in all its parts, the history of governments, the history of literature, the history of philosophy, the history of art, with one voice proclaim that you cannot. They proclaim that knowledge, even when regarded solely with reference to this world, is hollow and vain and helpless, as soon as it is cut off from religion. So long as knowledge works under the tutelage of religion, it is her great agent in promoting the good of mankind, in progressively bettering and ennobling their moral condition. But when knowledge absconds from this guardianship, and follows its own ways, it begins to stray into evil. Whatever good it may retain, is the stamp of its previous education: when this wears out, it crumbles and falls to pieces. When states are governed with a constant reference to the will of God, the governors, *though fools*, as by the worldly-sighted they may be deemed, *cannot err*. Not that this has ever actually been the case: for no nation has ever yet made the will of God the sole rule of its conduct in every crisis of its political life. But some have done so in a greater degree than others; and in the history of the same nation we find the operation of religious principles more

powerful at one time than at another. So that, although no government has ever been absolutely free from errour, this by no means proves that religion is apt to err. It is not religion that errs, but those passions and infirmities which cleave to it, and from which it has never been able to emancipate fallen humanity. Yet, while it cannot crush them altogether, it can do much, and far more than any other power, toward checking and curbing them. But as soon as the will of God is lost sight of, and left out of account, — when the rulers of a people forget man's prophetical character and heavenly destinies, and look at him merely in his naked, impotent, destitute humanity, as a reed shaken by the wind, — or when their sole aim is to increase wealth, to foster luxury, when they neither seek nor can conceive anything greater or better than a man clothed in soft raiment, — from that time forward, however wise they may be in their own conceit, they cannot go right. One scheme is supplanted by another; one system is reared on the back of another: but all are built upon a quicksand; and one after another is swallowed up. The history of the last century shews that the pursuit of national wealth, when disjoined from moral wellbeing, is only another form of the folly on account of which we look with such derision on our ancestors, the pursuit of the philosopher's stone. Nor is it less sure to impoverish the people that pursues it: in their outward condition they are reduced to beggary, in their inward to utter depravity. Capricious and inscrutable as the ways of fortune are usually accounted, they will be found on a careful examination to be in accord with the counsels and dispensations of an overruling providence. Whether in ancient or modern times, so long as a nation has been animated by a zealous

spirit of religion, it has grown in glory and prosperity and power. But when its religious spirit has begun to decay, its glory and prosperity and power have begun to decay also; and the departure of the former has always been the deathblow to the latter. Instances, it is true, may be cited of very small states, which have been overpowered and bereft of their independence in the very prime of their moral existence by the overwhelming pressure of some external foe. These however can hardly be regarded even as exceptions to the general law, that the glory and prosperity of a people depend upon its moral energy; any more than the death of the martyrs, or that of some good men among those who may have been swept away by some great physical calamity, militates against the universal truth, that God has never forsaken the righteous. God did not indeed think fit to work a miracle in order to save their lives: but the superhuman fortitude which the martyrs have displayed in the midst of their torments, has proved that God did not forsake them in the hour of their distress; that on the contrary He was with them most, when they most sorely needed Him, enabling them to hold out in the good fight until the last, and converting the flames which consumed them into a halo of glory, as their purified spirit disencumbered itself from the body which had been weighing it down. Thus has it been with states also, when they have fallen before might in defense of right. One may even regard it as a special favour vouchsafed to them, to have been cut off before they fell into that decrepitude, from which nothing human appears to be exempt, that so they might hold out the rare example of a people whose last hour has been the hour of its greatest glory. Their spirit too has been triumphant. Though they fell in

the cause of right, it is through such examples that right acquires its sacred influence over the minds of men, and triumphs in the end over might. So that these exceptions do not prove that the prosperity and power of a people, much less that its glory, which is its truest prosperity and its highest power, is independent of its religious character. Often on the other hand have nations, comparatively weak, been enabled through their moral and religious energy to repell foes, who according to all usual calculations would infallibly have crusht them. Thus even against the death which comes from without, religion will uphold a state; while against that more fearful death which springs from within, and which creeps through all its members, poisoning and benumbing the very heart and soul, it is the sure and only preservative. No religious people has ever fallen by any inward decay: no thoroughly irreligious people has ever been able to stand.

The same truth is enforced by the history of literature, by that of philosophy, by that of the arts. Whether in architecture or sculpture, in painting or music, everything most grand and sublime, every work in which the genius of man has best succeeded in giving an outward form and body to the ideal essence of beauty, with the least disparagement to its etherial purity, has been more or less prompted and elevated and hallowed by religion. Such was the case, as a moment's reflexion on the objects which meet your eyes every day will convince you, even among the heathens, who knew not the true God, but among whom the light was shining in darkness, although the darkness comprehended it not. Yet all the wiser and better among them delighted to indulge and to cultivate that craving for religion, for a renewal of man's original

paradisiacal communion with God, which after the Fall still remained a dim instinct in our being, — the last precious relic of our heavenly nature. This led gifted men to represent, so far as they were able, what they regarded as the attributes of the divine nature: and the endeavour to do so bore up their souls to far higher and nobler conceptions than anything with which the wilderness of this workday world would otherwise have supplied them. It is true, their religion, even when least impure, was still grievously imperfect. Their loftiest conceptions could never mount to anything beyond idealized humanity. The beauty of the outward corporeal world predominated in their minds over that of the inward and spiritual. Their pantheon rested on the earth. Christianity on the other hand has raised it up, and lifted it into the sky. While Pagan art, even when best, is still, in its main character, of the earth, earthy, Christian art, in its idea at least, and in proportion as it approaches to the fulfilment of that idea, is, and ought to be, of the heaven, heavenly. Its greatest perfection has been shewn in the exhibition of those feelings which descend from heaven upon earth, and those which earth in return sends up to heaven, in the representation of Christ's love for us, and of the love which we ought to feel for Christ. When art forgets its religious character and office, — when it ceases to look in the wilderness of the world for that which is symbolical and prophetical of the infinite and eternal,—when it contents itself with representing persons and things without regard to their moral significance in their fleeting outward form, or degrades itself into the purveyor of luxury, — it forfeits its dignity and worth; it becomes alternately feeble and extravagant; it loses the feeling of beauty, and even

the perception of truth, and dwindles before long into a branch of mechanical dexterity.

Be not surprised, brethren, that a minister of God's word should speak for a moment to you on subjects, which some of you may perchance deem profane. As, in preaching before a rustic or a commercial congregation, it would become me to illustrate the precepts of the Gospel by occasionally pointing out their bearings on the ordinary occupations of my hearers, so in this city, where the congregation I am addressing must needs consist almost wholly of persons belonging to the educated classes of society, and where the thoughts of most of those who ever think about anything must not unfrequently be engaged by objects of art, I have deemed that it would not be unseasonable, nor unsuitable to the character under which I appear before you, if I called your attention to the truth, that in this, as in every other region of human action, whatever man does, ought to be done for the glory of God, and with reference to the will of God. And be not overhasty in branding anything, which in itself is not necessarily sinful, with the name of profaneness. Such things as are not essentially of a moral nature, only become good or evil according to the use that we make of them. The fruits of the earth become an evil, if we indulge in them heedlessly and intemperately: the rays of the sun itself may become an evil, if we expose ourselves to them incautiously: and so may it be with the arts. They too may minister to evil: but they may also minister to good, and become the handmaids, and in some cases also the interpreters, nay, even the awakeners of religion. There have been, and no doubt even in these days there still are many, who, at least in the infancy of their faith, would be more forcibly imprest by visible

representations of our Saviour, in some of his numberless ministries of love, than by any written account of the same acts. Nor is anything that may lend its aid in fostering devotional feelings to be wantonly or sullenly rejected. Christianity confers a sanctity on things, which out of her sphere are indifferent, by enabling us to use them with faith: and it is an unwise mode of enlarging the kingdom of Christ, to give up any neutral territory to the devil. Rather is it not merely a natural and pardonable, but an amiable and praiseworthy feeling, that prompts us to consecrate the most precious and beautiful even of our earthly possessions to God, to bring Him our offerings of gold and frankincense and myrrh, to raise temples to Him far surpassing the habitations of man in magnificence, and to deck them out with all that art can produce expressive or symbolical of His worship. To effect this, as I have already said, is the proper object of the fine arts. When they forget it, when they cease to look up to it as their highest aim and reward, they immediately begin to degenerate and decline. But when animated by this principle, and regarded from this point of view, they too in a certain sense become prophets in the wilderness. They speak to the senses indeed; but they speak of something higher and purer and more enduring, than anything that lies within the range of the senses, — of truths that were, before man was, and that will last as long as he lasts. Thus the cold marble may start into life, and become instinct with those feelings which have strengthened the hearts of apostles and martyrs: the hues that issue from the sunbeam may be arrested, and made to portray the varied shades of Christian meekness and love: and the stream of sound may waft our spirits heavenward in its solemn pathetical flow, while we

are allowed to join with the angels in songs of praise to our God.

If the feelings I have wisht to excite have been awakened within you, it must already have occurred to you, that we, who are here assembled, may in a still more special sense be said to have come out into the wilderness to see a prophet. We may have had no such purpose: we may have been unconscious what we were doing. But what is Rome? Is she a reed shaken by the wind? she who has stood the assault of five and twenty centuries, who has conquered, and has been conquered, and again has conquered her conquerors, and made them bow down before her. Is she clothed in soft raiment? Nature indeed has clothed her in its beauty: Art has clothed her in its beauties: Time has fused and blended them together; and majestic and solemn is the garb of the city so full of years, so rich in the memories of bygone generations. But vain and most frivolous were the thought, if any have come hither in search of luxuries. Let them go to Baiae: this is no place for them. They on the other hand who have come out into the wilderness to see a prophet, may tarry here. For where upon earth is there any spot, Jerusalem alone excepted, in which the power of the Lord has been manifested, as it has been in this fateful city? — in this monumental mass, which neither the ferocity nor the cupidity of man has yet been able to sweep away, and in contending against which Time seems to have been curtailed of its all-effacing power, — in this vast indestructible tomb of her who once was the Mistress of the World. When other mighty cities have fallen, they have fallen utterly: the dominion of death over them has been total: the very ground on which some of them stood has become a prey to the elements: the

generations that won and rejoiced in their glory, live only, if at all, in the scanty and shadowy records of history. But when Rome had fallen, she rose again. When her carnal empire had been stript off from her, she came forth as the queen of a spiritual empire: and within her walls the dead seem still to subsist side by side with the living, in awful and almost indistinguishable communion. So that here the most trivial can hardly escape being struck with some lessons of serious thought, such as bear the mind from the present into the past, and through the past into the future. Even they can hardly fail to discern some of the truths, which are here written in characters of gigantic size, legible even to the most shortsighted, intelligible even to the dullest. For who can fail to perceive here, how strong and mighty man is, feeble as he may appear outwardly, when the Lord of Hosts is bearing him onward? how strengthless and impotent on the other hand, although armed with all the power and skill of the earth, when the Lord of Hosts is against him? Where else has the Lord shewn such strength with His arm? Where else has He so scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts? Where else has He so put down the mighty from their seat? and so exalted those that were of low degree? Where else do we read so plainly, that it is the Lord who giveth the victory, and that it is the Lord who taketh it away? Where else do we see so palpably, that, even in this world, despite of the violence and wiles of its prince, that which is morally the best, is in the end also the strongest, — that virtue, like knowledge, is power, — that moral energy in a people is indispensable, not only to win an empire, but to keep it, — and that luxury and vice enfeeble the arm, until the sceptre drops from its grasp? Of what place on the

whole globe may it be said with such truth, that, so far at least as regards natural religion, it is a prophet, yea, and more than a prophet.

At the same time, my brethren, before I conclude, I must remind you, that, though *among men born of women there had not risen a greater than John the Baptist, notwithstanding he that was least in the kingdom of heaven, was greater than he.* Though among the works of men's hands and minds none is greater, even in the sense we have been considering, none fitter to impress us with deep and momentous truths, than this city, in which all the might of the heathen world was concentrated and consummated, and all the fruits of its genius were stored up, yet the least of those truths which we draw exclusively from the Gospel, is deeper and more momentous than all that come from this or any other natural source. This city may tell us of the terrours of the Lord; but it cannot tell us of His mercies. It may display His power; but it cannot display His love. It may teach us to fear Him as our Governor; but it cannot teach us to love Him as our Father. It may shew us the ways of destruction; but it cannot shew us the ways of salvation. For this higher doctrine there is but One Teacher and Guide, even He who came down from the right hand of the Father, and divested Himself of His terrours, and arrayed Himself in mercy, and emptied Himself of His power, and shewed Himself as the pure Spirit of Love, and put on the form of a Servant, appearing amongst us as our Brother, that He might lead us to look up to His Father as ours, and offered up His precious body on the cross, to check the progress of destruction, and to purchase the salvation of all such as would follow His gracious guidance. Before Him therefore, the Captain of our Salvation,

let us now and ever cast down our hearts and minds: and whatever power, whatever talent, whatever knowledge, whatever wisdom we may receive as our portion in this world, whatever of noble and solemn feeling it may awaken, let us lay them meekly and devoutly at His feet, and employ them faithfully and diligently in His service.

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